

NEW YORK, JULY 30, 1926

No. 1087

FAME

Price 8 Cents

FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

JACK'S FORTUNE; OR, THE STRANGEST LEGACY IN THE WORLD.



As Jack, after great exertion, landed the heavy brass-bound box on the surface, the two crooks, who had been furtively watching him at work, sprang forward, the one in advance enveloping the boy in the folds of a tablecloth

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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JACK'S FORTUNE

OR, THE STRANGEST LEGACY IN THE WORLD

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Jack's Strange Legacy.

"It's a fierce night," said Jack Gardiner, gazing through a cracked pane of one of the windows of a ramshackle story-and-a-half cottage that stood on the outskirts of the town of Wallingford, upon the rain-soaked and wind-swept landscape outside, lit up at frequent intervals by the lurid lightning that preceded each terrible crash of heaven's artillery. "Fierce without and fierce within," he added, "for I'm afraid the old man won't live till morning. When he's gone there will be nothing for me to do but pull up stakes and strike out again for myself. I would have done that long ago, for I'm sick of hanging about this place, only I couldn't leave him in the lurch. He's been kind to me, a homeless boy, in his way, and the least I could do for him in return was to stand by him in his misfortune. Well, his troubles are about over, while I suppose the worst of mine are yet before me. I've heard people say this is a beautiful world, but I haven't found anything but hardship, and misery, and tough luck in it. Maybe things will turn out different with me some day, but I don't know. The prospect looks bitter and dreary enough now, just like the night, which is about as bad as a night well can be. Why should he have to die on such a night as this? Why should he get the short end of luck right up to the edge of the grave? I say it's tough."

Jack looked resentfully at the elemental commotion without as though nature was inflicting a personal injury on him. It was certainly a night to make cheedful people a little blue, and grouchy persons downright sulky. The wind howled and screeched as it tore around the cottage. Sometimes its fury died away for a brief interval, and then the boy could hear it whispering to itself among the eaves. What was it saying? Did it know that an old man, a mere wreck of humanity, was dying inside?

Was it trying to frighten the friendless and lonesome boy inside who was peering out into the storm? If that was its object it was wasting its fury to no purpose, for Jack Gardiner was too plucky a lad to be easily scared, though his customary good spirits were sadly dampened by the combination of unpropitious circumstances he was now facing. At that moment a weak voice called to him from the inner room. It was the voice of the man whose span of life was contracting with

each tick of the cheap wooden clock on a shelf near the door. Jack hastened into the dimly lighted bedroom where on a cot lay the wasted form of Andrew Marven.

"A drink, Jack," he said feebly.

The doctor had left a bracer in the shape of a cordial, to be administered whenever the patient was thirsty, and the boy gave him some of this, which revived him.

"Jack, my lad, I can't last much longer. I am going—going out with the tide."

Jack knew it and he said nothing.

"Where am I going, Jack? I feel like a battered old hulk, adrift without rudder or compass on a trackless waste of water, bound for the port of missing ships. When I have closed my eyes forever on this world, which has been a sad and bitter one to me, shall I open them on a brighter world where I have heard there is no sorrow or pain? Is there such a place, Jack? If there is I shall soon know. If death is merely the beginning of an eternal sleep, well, what's the odds? I shall be at rest, and rest is what I want. Now, Jack, I have something to say to you. I am going to make you my heir—the heir of a fortune. I see you look at me strangely. You think my wits are wandering—that the hand of Death is making me childish. You are saying to yourself, 'How can Andrew Marven make me heir to a fortune when for two years past he and I have been living from hand to mouth? If he possessed a fortune would we not have been living in luxury?' Listen, my lad, and I will explain. This fortune I spoke of exists as surely as we both at this moment draw the breath of life, but I have never been able to penetrate the secret that surrounds it. I have the clue to it, but it has baffled me. You are young. You are bright. Perhaps in time you may be able to find the key to this treasure. I will leave you the one clue just as it came into my hands. Study it well, for somewhere about it lies the secret of the fortune. If you can unravel the mystery your ingenuity will be well repaid."

Andrew Marven put his hands to this neck and raised into view a piece of strong, thin cord to which was attached a coin the size of a dollar, only half again as thick. It was on an old English copper penny bearing on one side the profile of George III, with the words "Georgius III" in a

circle, while at the bottom was the date 1781. The reverse side had been rubbed down smooth, and upon this surface certain figures and letters had been imprinted by a sharp tool. With some effort Andrew Marven removed the cord from his neck and held the coin out to the boy.

"There is your legacy, my lad. The figures and letters on the back are the clue to the treasure. I have tried for years to unravel the mystery of their meaning, but my most persistent efforts proved an utter failure. Perhaps you may have better luck. I only know one man who could read the secret if the coin fell into his hands. He is a Mexican named Sanchez Guerrero, and if he is still alive a greater scoundrel does not walk the earth unhung. Beware of him, for it is too much to expect that such a villain as he is gone to meet his master, the arch-fiend. For fifteen years, ever since the day this coin came into my possession, he has been on my track, intent upon wresting it from me, that he might obtain the clue to the treasure, and he has made life a burden to me. All my ingenuity to throw him off my track proved unavailing up to the moment I struck this town. Here I determined to make my last stand and fight it out with him, for I was weary of this game of hide and seek. Strange to say, though I took no special pains to cover my tracks in coming here, he has failed to appear during the two years I have lived here. That is why I fancy he may be dead. I cannot imagine any other reason that would keep him away. But as I have no knowledge that he has gone to his reckoning it is well that I warn you against him. He is as crafty and subtle as a serpent, and as relentless as fate. Put that cord around your neck so that the coin may always be on your person. It is a strange legacy I am leaving you, Jack—perhaps the strangest in the world; but it may prove to be your fortune."

Jack Gardiner mechanically obeyed the dying man's directions, though he had no great faith that anything would ever come out of his mysterious heritage. As Andrew Marven fell back on his pillow, exhausted by the efforts he had made, the boy gave him another drink of the cordial. He lay quite still with closed eyes, breathing heavily. Gradually his breath came easier, and it seemed to Jack that he had yielded to a fitful sleep. During all this time the storm had been raging furiously about the neighborhood, but neither Jack nor the dying man seemed to pay any attention to its presence. Now as the boy sat looking down at the man who had been his companion for nearly two years he became conscious of the elemental strife once more.

The uproar was not as violent as it was at the time he was looking from the window. The storm seemed to be passing away to the northwest. It was a lonesome vigil Jack Gardiner was keeping beside the only friend he had in the world, and it need not be wondered at if his thoughts were of the gloomiest character. There was little in his young life so far to give him any satisfaction. His father was serving a life sentence in the State prison for murder—the circumstantial nature of the evidence, and what was considered an ingenious defense, having saved him from the gallows. After his father's conviction things went from bad to worse with his mother and himself. Every cent of their savings had gone to the legal firm which had defended the husband and father,

and they fell from a position of comparative prosperity to one of absolute indigence.

Of the many friends they once had not one came forward to offer sympathy or give them a helping hand. In a word, they were ostracised from society and the double blow was more than Jack's mother could bear up under. She gradually faded away until one day, a wreck of her former self, she died, and the boy was left to fight his own way against an unfavorable fate. He became a tramp, working here and there whenever he could find anything to do, and a precarious living he made at the best. Two years since, on a Christmas morning, when the church bells of Wallingford were ringing out good will to all mankind, Jack reached the outskirts of the town weary and discouraged after an all-night walk.

A few inches of snow lay on the ground and the air was keenly cold. He had not eaten anything to speak of for twenty-four hours, and he did not know where to turn for shelter or a crust. He seemed to have reached the end of his endurance, and with a hopeless moan he sank down on the doorstep of the ramshackle dwelling in which we now find him. There Andrew Marven, returning from a neighboring store with packages of food for his Christmas dinner, found him. The man took him in, revived and fed him, and made him welcome, and from that day to this Jack Gardiner had been an inmate of the cottage, and the employment he secured in Wallingford enabled the strange pair, who found mutual sympathy in each other's society, to live in a fairly comfortable way.

Perhaps Jack was thinking of all this as he sat by the bedside of his dying companion, the one man who seemed to understand him and had treated him like a human being, and was figuring what his future would be when Andrew Marven was laid away in his grave. Whatever was the character of his thoughts they were suddenly broken in upon by a sharp rap at the door.

"Who can that be at this hour of the night, and on such a night as this is?" he asked himself. "We have never had any visitors before, why should we on this night of all others?"

While he mused, making no attempt to get up and ascertain who the caller might be, the knock was repeated, more insistent than before.

"Whoever it is seems to mean business," thought Jack. "I will see what he wants."

So he went to the door, took down the bar and threw it open. Two men, muffled up to their eyes, stood outside. There was a sinister glitter in the eyes of the man in advance which sent a chill through the boy's blood. There was something ominous in his attitude and bearing that Jack did not like.

"What do you want?" he asked in a tone that coincided with his feelings.

The sinister pair of eyes swept Jack from head to foot.

"I shall want Andrew Marven," said a voice in a foreign accent. "He lives here, is it not so?"

"Yes, he lives here; but——"

The stranger did not wait for him to finish his speech, but pushed his way unbidden into the cottage, followed by his companion, whose appearance was tough and unsavory.

"Hold on," cried Jack angrily, grasping him by the arm. "What right have you to force yourself in here?"

"Carramba!" hissed the stranger who had asked for Andrew Marven. "You talk to me of right? I go where I please. Where is he? Ah, this room."

Sweeping Jack rudely aside the stranger entered the bedroom. The dying man, aroused by the disturbance, looked at his visitor.

"Aha!" cried the stranger. "At last I have found you, Andrew Marven—at last. Now we will see if you will give to me what I want."

"Sanchez Guerrero!" gasped the dying man wildly.

"Si, senor. It is two year now that you give to me the slip. Now——"

"You are too late. The coin is——"

"Too late! What you mean? I am not in the humor to fool," hissed the Mexican savagely. "Give me the coin or I will tear it from you."

From under his cloak Guerrero drew a glittering knife and with the other hand he grasped Andrew Marven by the throat. This was too much for Jack Gardiner.

"You scoundrel!" he cried, leaping on the Mexican. "How dare you?"

CHAPTER II.—Jack Eludes the Mexican and His Pal.

"Carramba!" hissed Guerrero, turning fiercely on Jack. "I will have your life!"

As he raised his knife to carry out his threat, Andrew Marven, summoning his last remaining strength, sprang up in bed and seized the Mexican by the wrist.

"You shall not hurt the boy, villain! You shall not——"

Blood gushed from his mouth and choked his utterance. He gasped for air and then his head fell back and his body collapsed, dragging the Mexican down with him, for not for a moment did the dying man relax his grasp on the rascal's wrist. Guerrero struggled to free himself, but it was a dead man who now held him with a grip of steel. Jack, whose eye was on the knife, leaned forward and forced the weapon from his grasp. It fell with a ringing sound between the cot and the wall. With a terrible imprecation in Spanish, Guerrero wrenched his wrist free and then he saw that Marven was dead. Jack also saw that his only friend was a corpse.

"You have killed him, villain!" he cried. "Why didn't you let him die in peace?"

"I killed him!" ejaculated the Mexican. "It is a lie!"

"You did. He was dying anyway. He could not have lasted much longer. You jumped upon him and robbed him of the little breath he had left. You are a murderer!"

"Bah! Be quiet, or I send you after him," hissed the Mexican. "So he was dying. I did not know that. However, it makes no difference so long as I find what I came here for. He has led me a fine dance these fifteen year. Well, this is the end, and the fortune will now be mine."

He reached for the corpse.

"Leave him alone! You shall not touch him!" cried Jack furiously, grasping Guerrero by the arm.

"Carramba! You young whelp!"

The Mexican struck the boy a blow in the face that sent him staggering toward the door.

"Cutcliffe!" he shouted.

His companion appeared in the doorway.

"Take this boy and keep him quiet."

The man addressed as Cutcliffe seized Jack and dragged him into the living-room, while the Mexican slammed the door shut. Jack saw that resistance against this husky fellow would be a waste of energy on his part, so he sat still, watching the rascal in aggressive silence. Cutcliffe, finding that the boy made no resistance, but sat quiet enough in the chair, drew away from him. He took a pipe from his pocket, charged it with tobacco, and removing the chimney from the lamp lighted it at the flame. Then he walked over toward the door of the room and listened. Faint sounds came through the panels, as if the Mexican was busy ransacking the place. At length Guerrero opened the door and came out. His eyes sparkled with suppressed fury and disappointment.

"Have you found the bloomin' coin?" asked his companion.

The Mexican uttered an angry negative.

"Boy," he said, facing Jack and fixing him with his sinister eyes, "how long you have lived with Senor Marven?"

"Two years," replied Jack in sulky defiance.

"The senor has perhaps told you something about a copper coin which he had. Is it not so?"

"What business is that of yours?"

"Aha! You admit you know. Perhaps you will tell where he hid it?"

"How should I know where he hid it?"

"Carramba! You will not tell, eh? I know a trick that will make you open your mouth. Cutcliffe, you will find something to tie him, then we will see if the bird will sing or not."

"You won't tie me," replied Jack, jumping to his feet.

"The young senor will see," the Mexican replied malevolently, taking from his pocket a small piece of rice paper and then some tobacco with which he coolly proceeded to manufacture a cigarette.

This he lighted at the top of the lamp chimney while his associate was hunting for a piece of rope to tie Jack. Jack's eyes roved toward the door leading into the outer air, but the Mexican stood in a position that would enable him to easily cut him off if he made a break in that direction. The boy felt that he was in a mighty tight fix. Jack, however, was a plucky boy, and he felt a strong resentment against Guerrero for hastening Andrew Marven's death. He was fully determined that the villain should gain nothing through him he could in any way prevent him doing so. Cutcliffe finally found a piece of clothesline that would answer his purpose. Holding it in his hand he approached Jack. The boy, by a quick movement, placed the table between himself and the cockney.

"Powder me blue! Does the bloomin' young hidjit think as 'ow he can give me the slip?"

The Mexican smiled grimly and seemed not the least bit disturbed by Jack's change of base.

"The young senor cannot escape from this room until he has given me a clue to the copper coin," he said.

"You won't get any information from me," replied Jack doggedly.

"We waste time," said the Mexican impatiently.

"Capture him, Cutcliffe."

The Englishman made a dash to circle the table

as Guerrero placed himself in a position to prevent the boy making a successful retreat. Then Jack did something that upset all their calculations. Quick as a flash he snatched up the lamp and flung it with all his might in Cutcliffe's face. It struck him on the upper part of the chest, the hot chimney falling against his face and bringing a roar of pain from his lips. The lamp fell with a crash to the floor, rolled over several times and went out, leaving the room in darkness.

"Carramba!" roared the Mexican. "Do not let him escape!"

Jack slid under the table, rose with it supported by his head and two hands, and flung it in the direction of Guerrero's voice. There was a crash, a volley of imprecations from the Mexican, and the sound of a fall. Taking advantage of his chance Jack dashed for the door, flung it open, and rushed out into the night. Then taking to his heels he ran toward the nearest house, five hundred yards away.

CHAPTER III.—Jack's New Acquaintance.

When Jack reached the house in question he pounded lustily on the front door. It was about two in the morning and the people had long since retired to rest. The noise he made, however, was sufficient to raise a dead man almost, and it aroused the inmates in short order. Their first impression was that the house was on fire, and that the firemen were at the door. While the women folks were making a cautious investigation the owner of the house opened his bedroom window and called out:

"What's the matter? Who's there?"

"I am Jack Gardiner, who lives in the house over yonder. Let me in and I'll tell you what is the matter."

"Can't you tell me where you are? What has happened that you come over here raising such a terrible hubbub at my door, frightening the women into the idea that the house is on fire?"

"Andrew Marven, the man with whom I have been living, is dead," said Jack.

"Is he? Well, what is that to us? I'm not an undertaker."

"There are two rascals in the house, one of whom attacked both Marven and myself, and hastened his death. I barely made my escape from them. I want you to help me."

"I'm not a fool to butt in where I'm not wanted," replied the householder in a grouchy tone. "What you want to do is to go to the police. I think you have a lot of nerve to wake us up at this hour of the morning. Go on now, and make yourself scarce."

With these words the man slammed down the window, thereby intimating that Jack could expect no assistance from him.

Jack looked back through the darkness toward the cottage he had left, expecting to see the Mexican and his companion waiting somewhere in the gloom for him to step into the road again and give them the chance to pounce upon him. Not a sound came from the sloppy road, which lay quiet and solemn under the dull sky that threatened a renewal of the late rain.

With ears and eyes on the alert he left the unhospitable dwelling and continued on into the

town. The only thing he could do was to proceed to the police station, quite a distance away, and report the facts to the officer in charge. He knew the way to the building, which was in the heart of the business section, and thither he made his way as quickly as he could go.

Reaching the station he made known his errand to the officer nodding at the desk. After he had been questioned as though he were a criminal himself, two policemen were sent back to the cottage with him. The door was found open, the interior wrapped in gloom, and the place found tenanted only by the corpse.

The officers remained the rest of the night at the cottage with the boy, and in the morning the coroner was notified of Andrew Marven's death.

The body was removed to an undertaking establishment to be buried, the undertaker agreeing to give the old man a decent burial from what he could get from the sale of Andrew Marven's furniture and effects, and the few dollars that Jack had saved up.

On the following morning Marven was buried in a neglected corner of the cemetery, and Jack attended his obsequies as chief and only mourner.

Sadly, wearily and without aim or purpose Jack wandered about the streets of Wallingford until darkness fell again and the gnawings of a healthy appetite called his attention to the fact that he was very hungry. So he entered a cheap restaurant and ate a frugal supper. He then applied at the police station for a night's lodging. When he awoke next morning the sun was shining brightly. He was questioned by one of the policemen who had taken a fancy to his intelligent looking face, and the result was the officer collected a couple of dollars among his associates and presented the money to the boy. This kindly act went a long way toward arousing Jack's spirits, which had got down to a pretty low ebb, and he ate a good breakfast at the first restaurant he came to.

While eating he decided to leave Wallingford at once and try for work on some farm in the country.

Leaving the restaurant he walked straight down the main street of the town till he reached the county road, and then with a brave heart he started once more to make his own way in the world.

How far he would have to tramp before he came to a farm where he could apply for work he had not the slightest idea, but he knew that the road before him led to the rural district, and that was enough for him.

He toiled on down the road, catching glimpses of a river on the left from time to time, and looking over a wide panorama of fields and woods and hills on the right, with more distant and blue-looking hills bounding the prospect, till the position of the sun overhead told him that it was about noontime. Climbing a fence to rest his tired limbs he spied a farmhouse about a quarter of a mile away across a broad field. After resting a quarter of an hour he started for the house. When he presented himself at the door of a wide, cheerful-looking kitchen, he found the family, consisting of the farmer, his wife, two grown-up girls and three big boys, seated around a table at dinner. When he asked for work the farmer said he had none to give him, as he had ample help in his own sons.

"Where are you from—Wallingford?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack.

"Walked all the way from there, I suppose?"

"I have."

"Hungry, I dare say."

The boy admitted that he was.

"Well, you shall have your dinner here, at any rate," replied the hospitable agriculturist, and room was immediately made at the table for Jack.

When he had eaten all he could he offered to do some work to pay for his meal, but this offer was declined. The farmer told him that he did not think he would get any work this side of the next town, an unimportant place called Blackton, about fifteen miles away. So Jack resumed his tramp in good spirits. It was late in the afternoon, about six o'clock, when he caught sight of a church steeple in the distance which he readily conjectured indicated the presence of Blackton, which, though called a town, was not much larger than a good-sized village. The road crossed the railroad tracks, and at that point he saw a small station. As he approached the station he heard the whistle of the train, which presently came in sight at decreasing speed and finally came to a stop alongside the platform. Among the persons who alighted was a young man of nineteen or twenty, whose personal appearance might have been summed up as shabby genteel. He sported a watch-chain, however, had the knowing air of a city chap, and carried a black traveling-bag. Declining to patronize the hotel bus he started to walk to town, about half a mile away down a gentle slope. He came up to Jack as the bus dashed by, and he looked at the travel-stained boy with some interest.

"Bound for Blackton, I suppose?" he said in a friendly tone.

"Yes," replied Jack, pleased at the idea of being spoken to, for he yearned for any kind of companionship.

"You look as if you'd hoofed it for some distance," said the young man.

"I've walked from Wallingford."

"Have you friends in Blackton?"

"No. I haven't a friend in the world," replied Jack, a bit sadly.

"All alone, eh? Folks dead and thrown on your own resources? What's your name?"

"Jack Gardiner."

"Mine is Dick Swivel. Expect to find work in Blackton?"

"No. I'm looking for a place on a farm."

"Then you're a farmhand?"

"I never worked on a farm in my life."

"No? Why do you want to go farming?" asked the young man in some surprise. "I should think you'd rather stay in a town or city."

"I thought I might like farming. I'm tired of towns."

"Where are you going to stop?" asked the young man.

"I don't know, but I suppose I'll find some place."

"S'pose you stay at the hotel with me tonight?"

"I'd like to, but I can't afford it," replied Jack.

"Oh, it won't cost you anything. I'll pay the damage," replied the young man cheerfully.

"You're very kind, but I have no right to expect you to spend your money on me."

"Don't you worry about that. Money was made to be spent."

Jack thought his companion didn't look as if he

was overburdened with cash in spite of the watch-chain he sported.

"Here's the hotel now," said Dick Swivel, as they stopped in front of the Blackton House, a modest looking establishment of two stories and a half, with additions to one side and an ell in the rear. "Come on in," he added, grasping Jack by the arm and pulling him up on the front veranda, and thence into a large room on the ground floor. It was fitted up as a reading-room and office, with a billiard table and a pool ditto in the background. Dick Swivel registered for them both, and they were shown to a small, square room in one of the additions. Here they washed up and the young man loaned Jack a whisk broom to brush the dust from his clothes. While they were attending to their toilets the bell rang for supper.

"Are you hungry, Gardiner?" asked Swivel with a grin.

"I am, though I had a pretty good dinner about noon at a farmhouse along the road."

"Well, come on. We'll go down and see what kind of provender this hotel provides its patrons with."

Accordingly they found their way to the dining-room, and were shown to two seats by a girl waitress, who proceeded to set a plain but substantial meal before them.

CHAPTER IV.—Mysterious Disappearance of Dick Swivel.

The meal proved a sumptuous one in Jack's eyes, though in point of fact it was nothing to go into raptures over. After supper they adjourned to the veranda, and Swivel, producing a corn-cob pipe, indulged in a smoke.

"Do you smoke cigarettes?" asked the young man. "If you do I'll give you a nickel to buy a package."

"No. I don't smoke anything," replied Jack, wondering at the uncommon generosity of his new acquaintance.

"You don't drink either, I suppose?"

"No. Nothing in the intoxicating line."

They talked together for an hour or so, Dick Swivel proving himself quite an entertaining companion, and then they retired to their room and turned in for the night. Jack slept like a top till about two o'clock, when he was awakened by the booming of a bell. Jack sat up in bed and listened. He wondered what the sound meant. Boom—boom—boom! Then he became aware that his companion was not in bed, nor was he in the room.

"Where can he be?" Jack asked himself.

He got up and looked around. The black traveling-bag, which his companion had brought to the room, and which had reposed beside Jack's seedy carpet-bag when they went to bed, was missing.

"That's funny," thought Jack. "Why should he carry his bag away in the middle of the night if he merely went out to find out what the bell was ringing for?"

Boom—boom—boom! continued the deep-toned bell. While the absence of his companion was rather a surprise to him, the disappearance of the black bag was a puzzle that he could not make head or tail of. Jack got up, pulled on his shoes

and stockings and trousers, and started to walk out into the corridor, when to his further surprise he found the door locked. He struck a match and looked at the keyhole, expecting to find the key on the outside, but it wasn't. There was no key in the keyhole. Jack scratched his head in some bewilderment.

"Why did Swivel lock me in the room in the first place, and why carry off the key in the second?" the boy asked himself.

Of course these were questions he couldn't answer. He went to the window and looked out, but couldn't see any signs in the air of a conflagration. The bell continued to send forth its sonorous alarm for some minutes, and then it ceased, and its vibrations died away into almost profound silence.

"I'd like to know what's up," thought Jack, who was as curious as the majority of boys. "There is certainly something wrong in town or that bell wouldn't have boomed out in that fashion. Since the door is locked I wonder if I can't get out by this window? It's only a slight drop to the ell below, and from there I could easily reach the ground. I could return the same way, for I see there's a short ladder in the yard. I'll do it. I will probably meet Swivel at the scene of excitement."

So Jack put on his jacket, let himself down on to the roof of the ell, and jumped to the ground. He was soon hurrying along Main Street in the direction whence the sound of the bell had come. He saw a crowd in front of a building, which he presently found out was the Blackton Bank.

"What's the excitement?" Jack asked a man on the fringe of the mob.

"Bank has been robbed, I understand," was the reply.

"The bank robbed!" ejaculated Jack. "Was that why the bell was rung?"

"Of course. The bell was placed on the roof of the bank to be used as an alarm in case the watchman could not use the telephone for some reason. You are a stranger in town, I guess."

"Yes; I came here about dark, and am stopping at the Blackton House," replied Jack.

Jack soon learned that there was no doubt that the bank had been entered by three persons, the watchman bound and gagged, and the safe looted of a considerable amount. Questioned by the police for a description of the burglars, the watchman said they had come upon him so suddenly, with faces covered with masks, that he wasn't able to get a good look at them. Jack looked around for his new acquaintance, but saw no signs of him. After hanging around the bank until the crowd began to break up, Jack returned to the hotel, climbed up on the ell roof with the help of the ladder, and pulled himself into his room through the window. He half expected to find Dick Swivel back ahead of him, but he wasn't, and so he removed his clothes, went back to bed, and in a short time was asleep again. The room was bright with sunshine when Jack awoke about eight o'clock. Dick Swivel and the black bag were still absent, and Jack wondered why.

He tried the door and found it was locked as before, and he asked himself as he dressed if he would be obliged to leave the room again by the window. After brushing his hair neatly he looked out of the window, thinking it advisable to call somebody's attention to the fact that his door

was locked and the key gone, rather than make himself conspicuous by descending to the ground by way of the roof of the ell. As his eye took in the roof below he saw a brass key lying there, glistening in the sunlight. It didn't seem likely that that could be the missing key, but with the idea that it might fit his door he got out of the window, picked it up and returned to the room. Trying it in the lock he found that it fitted exactly, the door opened and he walked out into the corridor. He went down to the office and turned it in at the desk. The proprietor of the house was behind the counter reading a paper.

"Have you seen the young man who came with me last evening?" Jack asked him.

"Not this morning," was the answer. "Maybe he's in the dining-room getting his breakfast."

Jack had his doubts about finding his companion there, but as he was hungry he went to the dining-room, took his seat at a table and waited for one of the waitresses to come over. When she did Jack propounded the same question to her. She answered that the young man in question had not been to breakfast yet. Nine o'clock came and still there was no sign of Dick Swivel. Jack then went around asking everybody connected with the house that he met if they had seen his acquaintance, but they had not. Finally he went to the desk again where the proprietor was talking with several people about the robbery at the bank. Jack asked for his carpet-bag, which he had left at the desk when he turned in his key. The proprietor looked at his book, saw that a night's lodging with supper and breakfast had been paid for in advance by his two guests, and handed him the carpet-bag.

"Can I leave a note for the young man who came with me last evening?"

"Sure," said the proprietor.

So Jack sat at a writing-table, wrote a short note, enclosed it in an envelope, and after addressing it to Dick Swivel, handed it to the proprietor of the hotel. Then he left the house and started down the shady street in the direction he was bound, still wondering where his late acquaintance had gone to with his black bag.

CHAPTER V.—Jack Outwits the Bank Robbers.

Before quitting the town altogether Jack walked into a baker shop and bought a package of crackers, and next door he got half a pound of cheese. He wanted to provide himself with a meal in case he did not reach a farmhouse by the time he got hungry. His forethought stood him in good stead, for along about noon, with not a house in sight, the sky clouded up and he was obliged to take refuge in an old shed from the rain which came on with unexpected suddenness. The shed was an old abandoned, dilapidated affair, fitted with two horse stalls, and had a loft above, originally for the storage of hay, access to which was gained by a flight of steps at the back.

Jack was sitting on the steps munching his cheese and crackers and watching the light rain outside when he saw three men approaching the shed from the direction of the road. There was something familiar about the three that attracted his attention. One of them carried a black bag, while the others had bundles under their arms.

Jack stopped eating and watched them attentively.

"That chap with the bag seems the dead picture of Dick Swivel," he said to himself. "Can it be he? If so, what is he doing out here, and who are the men he is with?"

As the trio drew nearer Jack became satisfied that the young chap with the bag was Swivel beyond a doubt. But his consternation was great indeed when he recognized the other two as Sanchez Guerrero, the Mexican, and his associate Cutcliffe. Jack knew there would be something doing if they discovered him in the shed toward which they were bound, so he did the only thing he could do—retreated to the loft, hoping they would not come up there themselves.

In a few minutes they entered the rickety building, and hardly were they under cover before the rain began to come down in right good earnest.

"We pulled that bloomin' bank job off in great shape," said Cutcliffe in a tone of great satisfaction. "We 'ave a good chawnce now to count the swag and divide it hup."

"That's right," nodded Swivel. "Just keep your optics on the field outside so that nobody can pop in on us unawares, and the Mexican and we'll divide the plunder."

So these three were the burglars who had broken into the Blackton Bank. Dick Swivel had evidently come down by rail to join the other two, the crime having been planned ahead.

"No wonder," thought Jack, "that I found him missing from the room when the alarm bell woke me up. He put up at the hotel as a kind of blind. I s'pose he took a kind of fancy to me when he overlook me near the station, and finding me hard up treated me to a night's lodging and a couple of square meals. He's all right in his way, but I can't say that I like his way much. I suppose he's got the plunder from the bank in his black bag, and they're going to divide it among them."

Jack's supposition was correct.

Dick Swivel had the plunder in his bag, and was going to make an equal division of it into three parts. He opened the bag and began taking out package after package of money, laying the same on the floor.

"Hist!" came a warning from the cockney crook.

"What's up?" asked Swivel, pausing in his work.

"Put hup the money. There's a man comin' this way as fast as he can run."

"Carramba!" cried Guerrero angrily.

Dick Swivel tumbled the packages back into his bag, snapped it to and running up the steps shoved it into the dark loft close to where Jack was crouching. Then he slipped back again and the three waited, in a salky humor, for the newcomer, who was drenched to the skin, to enter the shed, which he did in a few minutes.

He proved to be a farmhand belonging to the farm on which the shed stood, and seemed to be in no way surprised to find the shed already tenanted. The black bag stood so close to Jack in the loft that he could easily put his hand on it without moving. What a great thing it would be if he could recover that money for the bank! The very idea of such a thing sent the blood bounding through his veins. The thought of a reward in connection with the thing stimulated him. If he received \$100 it would be a small fortune to him.

While he figured upon the matter the rain thundered upon the roof of the shed and almost drowned the desultory talk he heard below. He decided that instead of making off with the black bag and his own as well it would be better for him to transfer the money to his carpet-bag, as one bag would be easier for him to carry than two. With that idea in his head he opened the black bag and began transferring the packages of money to his own bag.

When the last bundle had been shoved into his own bag it suddenly occurred to him that it would be a good joke to fill the vacant space in the black bag with a bundle of refuse that lay close by in the loft. The idea appealed to the humorous side of Jack's nature, and he no sooner thought of it than he carried it out. With great caution Jack moved inch by inch over toward the rear opening in the loft, carrying his bag with him. The rattle made by the rain on the roof greatly aided him, and he reached the hole at last without any misadventure.

Jack looked out on the teeming landscape, and it was with no great feeling of pleasure that he contemplated the drenching that was before him. Pushing his legs and body out backward, and dragging his carpet-bag after him, Jack dropped to the ground as lightly as a monkey might.

With the bag over his shoulder he started off across the field in the drenching downpour, which soon soaked through his threadbare apparel to his skin.

CHAPTER VI.—Jack Returns the Money to the Bank and Is Rewarded.

At the end of the field Jack got over a fence into the next one. By this time the rain had eased up a good bit. He kept on toward a small wood he saw a short way ahead. As he was about to make his way in among the trees he saw a prosperous looking farmhouse about a quarter of a mile away. He lost no time in reaching it and was soon knocking on the kitchen door. His wretched condition aroused the sympathy and hospitality of the woman of the house, who opened the door.

"Come in, come in," she said. "My goodness! Why, you're wet to the skin."

"Yes, ma'am, I'm pretty wet," replied Jack in as cheerful a tone as he could muster. "If I'd been in the river I couldn't be much wetter."

"John!" called the woman to her husband.

When John appeared she said:

"Take this boy upstairs and give him some dry clothes to put on. Why, he's a perfect wreck. Been out in all that heavy rain. Bring his wet garments down here and I will wring them out and hang them up to dry around the fire."

John guided Jack upstairs to a small back room and told him to strip. While the boy was doing this the farmer was picking out some dry duds for him to put on for the time being. Fifteen minutes later Jack felt quite comfortable once more, and was explaining to the farmer and his wife that he was caught in the rain while walking along the road en route for some farm where he could get work.

"I'd give you an opening on my farm, only I have all the help I can handle just now," said the man. "There are several farms between this and Willowdale, which is a matter of sixteen miles

from here. You ought to be able to find work on one of them."

Supper was nearly ready before Jack's clothes were fit for him to put on again. By the time the meal was over it was growing dark and Jack asked the farmer if he might sleep in the barn that night, as he didn't like to tramp at night. He received permission to do so, and he turned in early, being careful to keep the carpet-bag with him. It was broad daylight when he awoke, and he heard the farmer moving about the lower floor of the barn. Immediately after breakfast he thanked the farmer and his wife for their kind hospitality, and started back for Blackton to restore the stolen money to the bank. He had gone but half a mile when a wagon bound for that town overtook him, and he was thus enabled to get a ride over the rest of the road.

Owing to the robbery of all its available cash the Blackton Bank had been compelled to temporarily close its doors, so when Jack reached the building he found the entrance shut. A number of townspeople were standing there reading the typewritten notice posted up, which stated that the institution was in the hands of the State bank examiners. As nobody was admitted into the building Jack found himself barred out with the rest. Finally an automobile came up to the curb and the boy heard somebody say that the gentleman in the vehicle was the president of the bank. Jack rushed over to the machine just as the president started to alight.

"Are you the president of the bank?" Jack asked.

"Yes, my boy. What do you want?"

"I have brought back the money that was stolen the night before last."

"You've brought the stolen money back!" ejaculated the gentleman. "What do you mean?"

"I mean I've brought it back. I recovered it from the thieves who stole it."

"If you brought it back," replied the gentleman incredulously, "where is it?"

"In this carpet-bag."

The president seized the bag, lifted it into the auto and opened it. It seemed almost too absurd for him to expect that the boy's story was true. Yet the moment he exposed the interior of the bag he saw that it was jammed full of packages of bills, done up in regulation bank style. Snapping the catch to again, he took the bag in one hand and caught Jack by the arm with the other.

"Come inside and tell me how you managed to recover this money. You've done what three detectives have not managed to accomplish."

He led the way to the door of the bank, pressed an electric bell and they were presently admitted by the janitor. The president took Jack directly to his office. The cashier followed them inside to consult with his superior.

"Shut the door, Mr. Cook," said the president, "and take a seat. A most extraordinary thing has happened. This boy has, by his own statement, recovered the money taken by the burglars the night before last."

The cashier looked his amazement.

"He has?" he ejaculated. "Where is it? In that carpetbag?"

"It appears to be," replied the president. "First of all, open it, Mr. Cook, take out the packages you will find in it, count the amounts and see if they tally with the sum taken."

The cashier followed instructions and there was a silence in the little room until Mr. Cook announced that the whole of the money stolen was there.

"Now, my lad, we'll hear your story. It must be a singular one. First of all I want to know your name and where you live."

"My name is Jack Gardiner, and I don't live anywhere."

"You don't live anywhere?" exclaimed the president.

"No, sir. I haven't any home. The man I lived with for the past two years in Wallingford died a few days ago and that threw me on my own resources."

"Then your parents are dead?"

"My mother is."

"And your father?"

"I'd rather not speak about him."

"Well, tell us your story about how you came to recover from the thieves the money stolen from the bank. As there seem to have been three men implicated in the crime, it appears a most extraordinary circumstance that you, a boy, were able to get their plunder away from them."

"It was accident more than anything else that enabled me to turn the trick."

"Well, go ahead. We are waiting impatiently to hear your story."

Jack began his narrative by describing how he had made the acquaintance of the young man named Dick Swivel near the Blackton station. How they had walked as far as the Blackton House together, and how he had accepted the young man's invitation to stay with him at the hotel all night. Then he stated how, after they had both gone to bed, he had been awakened by the alarm bell on the roof of the bank building, and was surprised to find that his companion was not in bed or even in the room. He had evidently got up, dressed and disappeared, taking his black traveling-bag with him. Jack told how he had got up and dressed, too, with the intention of going out to learn the cause of the alarm.

"I was astonished to find the door locked and the key gone," he said, "so I had to get out by the window and the roof of the one-story ell underneath it. I expected to find Dick Swivel at the scene of the disturbance, but he wasn't there. After I learned the bank had been robbed I returned to the hotel and climbed into the room by the same way I had left it."

Jack then went on to tell how after waiting some time next morning for Swivel to show up he had left a note for him at the hotel, and then started on his journey again.

"Where were you bound?" asked the president.

"I wanted to find work on some farm, and expected to take up with the first offer I got, for all the money I have in the world amounts to only a little over two dollars."

"Go on."

Jack told how he had walked along the county road until about noon, when he had to take shelter from the rain in an old dilapidated shed. Then he described the arrival there of the three crooks with the black bag containing the bank plunder.

"They intended to take advantage of the chance to divide the money, and started to do so when they were interrupted by the appearance of a young farmhand," said Jack.

He then went on to tell how Dick Swivel had

shoved the black bag containing the money into the loft where he had taken refuge in order to put it out of the newcomer's sight, he supposed.

"When I found that the money I knew had been stolen from this bank was within my reach I immediately began to figure on taking possession of it and returning it to the bank. I believed that was my duty, though at first I couldn't see how I could put the job through."

Jack then explained how he had finally managed the trick, and got away from the shed in the pouring rain without attracting the attention of the three rascals.

"Well, upon my word, young man, I cannot compliment you too much on the part you have played in this affair. You are certainly entitled to full credit for restoring the stolen money, and you shall be suitably rewarded as soon as I call a meeting of the directors and they have heard your story. In the meantime, while you remain in Blackton, you shall be the guest of the bank. I will make arrangements for your stay at the Blackton House at our expense. I will send you there with a clerk, and you may expect to be summoned here some time this afternoon to meet the directors, to whom I shall want you to repeat your story."

Accordingly the president of the bank sent Jack to the Blackton House in time for him to sit down to a good dinner, and he was duly registered as a guest of the bank. At three o'clock the clerk called to escort him back to the bank. The directors and the bank examiner, who had just arrived, were assembled in the board room. The president introduced Jack to them and he was then invited to repeat his story, detailing how he had recovered the bank's funds from the thieves. When he had finished one of the directors offered a resolution tendering the boy the thanks of the bank and a reward of \$1,000. The resolution was carried unanimously and the cashier was instructed to pay the money over to Jack. With the \$1,000 in his pocket he was sent back to the hotel, and he went like one in a dream, elated beyond measure at his great good fortune.

CHAPTER VII.—Jack Meets With a Surprise.

On reaching the hotel again Jack went directly to the room assigned to him, took out the ten one-hundred-dollar bills, and spreading them on the bed looked at them as if they were the most wonderful curiosities in the world. For the first time in his life he began to realize that the possession of a considerable sum of money carried with it a sense of responsibility and anxiety.

"I can't carry this money around with me. I'd stand a good chance of losing it. Or I might be robbed, and that would be a terrible thing. I can't realize that I am worth a small fortune. Why, what couldn't I buy with \$1,000?"

It was a rich treat for him to finger those bills as he counted them over and over again.

"I'll have to break one of them, for I need a decent suit of clothes for one thing."

He picked up one of the bills and looked at it regretfully. He hated to spend any part of it, not from any miserly feeling, but because the bill looked too good to be parted with. The principal thing was how was he to dispose of all this money

so that it would be perfectly safe? He decided to consult with the president of the bank. By the time he had reduced his satisfaction and enthusiasm within reasonable bounds the bell rang for supper, and stowing his money away in his pocket he went downstairs to the dining-room.

That night Jack hid the money under the mattress of his bed, but his anxiety about it caused his sleep to be disturbed by bad dreams, in all of which Guerrero, the English crook, and Dick Swivel figured with unpleasant prominence. He woke up several times in a fright, and was not relieved until he had ascertained that the bills were safe where he had put them. He was up and downstairs next morning nearly an hour before breakfast was ready, and after the meal he walked about town until he thought it was time for the president to be at the bank.

When Jack arrived at the bank, which was not open, he found a crowd around the door reading a notice by the bank examiner which stated that owing to the recovery of the stolen funds the bank would doubtless be able to resume business in a few days. There was also a notice signed by the president which stated that the institution was perfectly solvent, but owing to official red tape a few days must elapse before business could be resumed. Jack pushed the button, and when the janitor came to the door he asked for the president.

"He hasn't arrived yet," replied the factotum. "However, you may come in and wait for him. I expect he will be here any time."

So Jack entered the bank, and half an hour later the president arrived.

"I called to ask you what I had better do with that \$1,000 the bank presented to me," said Jack. "I don't want to carry it around with me, for I might lose it, or it might be stolen from me. What would you advise me to do?"

"If you wish to leave it with the bank as a special or time deposit, you will receive interest on it at the rate of 3 per cent. per annum. Or you can take it over to the Blackton Savings Bank and deposit it on interest. In either case the money will be perfectly safe and at your disposal at any time you call for it, and it will be earning from \$30 to \$40 a year interest as long as you do not draw upon it," said the president. "On the whole, I think you'd better deposit it in the savings bank. I'll send a clerk with you to see that the matter is put through all right."

"Thank you, sir. I shall want to use about \$20 of it for a new suit of clothes and other things. I suppose the savings bank will give me the change."

"It would be a pity to break the amount for such a small sum, therefore I will make you a present of \$25 to buy you the new suit and whatever else you need," said the president.

Jack objected at first to receiving any more money, but was prevailed upon to accept the \$25 as a personal present from the head of the bank. A clerk was sent with the boy to the savings bank and he made his deposit in due form and received a pass book, though some objection was raised because he could not give any address. This was settled by the clerk giving the Blackton Bank as his address. Jack then arranged to leave his bank-book with the commercial bank, leaving his signature with it as a means of identification. He then bought a new suit, a few other needed

things and a substantial suitcase. He placed all his personal property in the suitcase and discarded the threadbare carpet-bag.

"I guess I can afford to buy a ticket to Willowdale by rail," he mused. "That will save me a day's tramp over the road. Then I can look for a job in that neighborhood. Maybe I won't tackle a farm after all. Willowdale is on Lake Michigan. I may be able to get something better in that town. Now that I'm worth \$1,000 I feel like a different kind of boy. If it wasn't for the fact that my father is in the State prison I believe I'd almost feel happy. I don't believe he ever committed that crime. He swore on the stand that he didn't, and nobody saw him do it. But he wasn't able to prove his innocence, and as everybody believed him guilty, he had to go to prison for life. It was not only hard on him, but it killed my mother and made a tramp of me. I wonder if the truth will ever come to light?"

After dinner Jack gave up his room at the hotel and took the afternoon train for Willowdale, where he arrived about dark, and registered at a cheap hotel on the European plan, to which he had been recommended by the man who sat with him on the same double seat on the train. He didn't fancy the hotel much, particularly after having had a look at his room, and congratulated himself on the fact that he had not brought his \$1,000 with him. The hotel was near the lake front, close to the wharves that were occupied with schooners, two and three-masters; sloops, and various other small craft. Jack spent an hour walking around the neighborhood, chiefly inhabited by the poorer class of people in town, and then retired to his room, fully determined to find different lodgings for himself on the morrow, that is, if he saw any prospects of remaining in the town.

Undressing himself he jumped into bed and was soon asleep. Two hours later he was suddenly awakened by a crash in the adjoining room on the left, and a heavy body struck the wall against which his bed lay with a concussion that seemed to shake the house. As Jack sat bolt upright in bed, somewhat bewildered by the noise and the shake-up, a loud roar of laughter reached his ears from the next room. So distinct was it that it almost seemed as if no partition interposed between the rooms.

"Vell, dash me bloomin' heyes!" cried a voice in cockney tones. "Vy don't they 'ave chairs what vill 'old a chap hup in these 'ere 'otels? Powder me blue! If I don't believe hit was honly 'eld together vith glue. It's a houtrage on the public. I might 'ave broken me back. I don't see that there's hanythink to larf hat."

"It was funny to see the way the chair collapsed under you, Cutcliffe, and you pitched against that wall as if you meant to bore your way into the next room," said a voice that Jack recognized as Dick Swivel's.

A scrambling sound followed as if the Englishman was picking himself up.

"You'll have to sit on the bed now," said Swivel. "Do it gently, for I expect to sleep on it when we get back from the job we have on to-night."

Another brief spell of silence followed. Jack fairly gasped at his proximity to those three bank robbers, especially the Mexican, for whom he had an especial dread. It seemed very singular to

him that that scoundrel should come across his path for the third time in such a short interval, and apparently without design. He began to wonder if the possession of the mysterious old English penny had some peculiar influence in drawing them together. It struck him as rather odd that the Mexican had not returned to the cottage in Wallingford so long inhabited by himself and Andrew Marven, and made a thorough search of the place by daylight.

As a matter of fact this is exactly what Guerrero did, but so deftly had he conducted his investigations that he left no sign of his movements on the premises. After his failure to find the copper coin he began to suspect that it might be in Jack's possession. As this was merely a supposition, and he was interestd in a couple of shady jobs that promised tangible results, he did not bother with the boy, feeling confident that he could track him down later. He was all the more certain of this when he recognized his quarry in the boy Dick Swivel extended his hospitality to, and learned from Dick that Jack was looking for a job on some farm between Blackton and Willowdale. The three rascals were in high glee over the success of their Blackton Bank job until they discovered that their plunder had vanished in the most mysterious manner.

Then their consternation and fury hardly knew bounds. To make matters worse the presence of a couple of detectives in the neighborhood made it dangerous for them to attempt any investigation. Accordingly they made tracks for Willowdale at once to put through the second job on their programme. This was the looting of the home of a little old gentleman named Matthew Warden, a well-known antiquarian and collector, who lived with his young niece and three servants in a roomy old turreted house in the midst of spacious grounds on the lake shore a mile outside of Willowdale. Matthew Warden was reputed to have one of the most interesting as well as valuable private collections of antique gold and silver vessels, ornaments and rare coins in the country, which he had accumulated during thirty years of research in foreign lands, and at the expenditure of a considerable fortune.

CHAPTER VIII.—Jack Visits the Station House.

"I 'ope there won't be no fluke habout the 'ousebreakin' job we're on tonight," Jack heard Cutcliffe say.

"Don't you worry," replied Swivel. "We'll pull it off all right, eh, Guerrero?"

The Mexican nodded confidently.

"I was out to the place this afternoon looking around," continued Dick. "They've a new gratin' set in the window of the pantry, as if they thought that was the only way a gent of our profession would try to get in by, and all the lower windows are protected by steel shutters."

"Steel shutters!" cried the Britisher. "It's goin' to be a 'ard matter to force one of them."

"What do we want to waste our energy on steel shutters for when there are easier ways of gettin' inside?"

"Let's 'ear habout the easier ways."

"The kitchen windows are protected by iron

bars, but I discovered that the wood around them is as soft and rotten as touchwood, and the bars can be wrenched out as easy as if they were stuck into putty."

"Then we ought to 'ave no trouble gettin' in at all."

"'Ow far is the 'ouse from 'ere?"

"About a mile and a half from this place."

"Ve'll go by the quickest way. What time vill we make a start? It's 'arf-past eleven now."

"We have lots of time, for we can get there in half an hour," replied Swivel.

Jack, who heard every word that was spoken in the next room, was not a little excited to learn the character of the job the rascals had on hand for that night. After more jingling of glasses the crooks began to discuss the nature of the swag they expected to lift, and how they should get rid of it to the best advantage. Thus Jack learned the name of the man they were going to rob, and his hobby as a collector of rare and valuable curios. While his ears lost not a word of the conversation carried on in the next room his mind was busy figuring on how he could frustrate their project, and save the old collector from being robbed. He realized that he had very little time in which to act, and that he was under the great disadvantage of being a stranger in the town.

"I must get into my clothes at once and try and find my way to the police station. I'll put the authorities wise to the plans of these rascals, and the police ought to be able not only to put a spoke in their game, but to capture them as well. It would give me a whole lot of satisfaction to get that Mexican put behind the bars. I'd rather see him pinched than both the others, for he is what I call a bad man."

Jack hastily dressed himself, and having satisfied himself that the three crooks were making no immediate preparations to leave the room, he slipped downstairs to the street, which was almost deserted at that hour. The shops in that vicinity were shut up, and no lights were to be seen but those that shone from the cheap grogeries, and from an occasional tenement window. Jack had not the slightest idea where the police station was, but he hoped to meet a policeman, or some respectable person who would be able to direct him. The boy hurried up the street for two blocks without meeting a soul, and then he came upon a corner drug-store which was being shut up for the night.

"Can you tell me where the police station is?" Jack asked the red-headed clerk.

The young man stared at him a moment and then said:

"Are you a stranger in town?"

"Yes," replied the boy.

"You're not looking for a free lodging for the night, are you?" the clerk continued, looking Jack over and noting the fact that he seemed too respectable appearing for that.

"No," replied our hero impatiently.

"The station is three blocks up on the next street that way," and the clerk waved his hand.

"Thank you," said Jack, who left the store and hastened in the indicated direction.

A red lamp over the front portal of a certain building bore the words "Police Station." That was enough to tell Jack that he had reached the right place. He sprang up half a dozen steps and entered a good-sized room off a small hall. A

man in uniform was seated at a desk reading a newspaper.

"Well, what do you want, young man?" he inquired.

"I've come with information about a burglary this is to be committed tonight?" Jack answered.

"What's that?" asked the man, dropping the paper and looking at his young visitor sharply.

Jack repeated his remark and added:

"The house that is to be robbed is about a mile outside the town on the shore of the lake. A collector of rare antiques and coins, named Matthew Warden, lives there."

The officer knew the place and the man. In fact, there was scarcely anybody in Willowdale who didn't know the estate called Red Gables and its owner by reputation.

"How did you learn that Mr. Warden's place was to be robbed tonight?" asked the officer, almost incredulously.

Jack told him how he was a stranger in Willowdale, having only arrived at the town that evening by rail from Blackton.

"A man I met on the train referred me to the Lake House as a cheap place for me to put up," went on the boy. "It's cheap enough, but I can't say that I like the place. I went to bed about nine o'clock, and a while ago I was woke up by a racket in the adjoining room. The partition between the rooms appeared to be only boards covered with paper. I could easily hear all that was said in the room. I was astonished to recognize the voices of three crooks——"

"Three crooks!" interrupted the officer. "How did you know they were crooks?"

"Because I have met them before."

"Where and under what circumstances?"

"Two of them—a Mexican named Guerrero, and an Englishman named Cutcliffe, I met in Wallingford under circumstances that would take too long to explain now. I can assure you they are tough characters. The third is a young fellow about twenty, whose name is Dick Swivel. The three are the men who robbed the Blackton Bank the other night. You must have heard about it."

"Of course I heard about it, and we have received instructions to look out for the three rascals, but only a meager description of them was furnished us by the Blackton police. How do you know these are the fellows who robbed the bank?"

"I know they are; but it would take too long to explain now."

"By the way, what is your name, and what brought you to Willowdale?"

"My name is Jack Gardiner, and I came here to look for work."

"Jack Gardiner!" ejaculated the officer. "Seems to me your name is familiar to me. Are you the boy who recovered the money stolen from the Blackton Bank?"

"Yes, sir."

The officer regarded him with interest.

"I read about the matter in the Blackton News. It was a clever piece of work on your part, young man. Now proceed with this story of yours."

Jack told the officer all about the details of the contemplated robbery of Mr. Warden's house that night, just as he overheard it through the thin partition that divided his room from that in which the crooks were smoking and drinking.

"You ought to be a detective, young man,"

smiled the officer grimly, when Jack had concluded. "I will send three policemen with you to the Lake House to arrest these rascals."

"That might be a waste of time," replied Jack, "for it is half-past twelve now, and they may have started for the scene of the robbery. Wouldn't it be better to send the policemen direct to Mr. Warden's home? I'll go with them. If you captured these fellows in the act of trying to enter the house you would have them dead to rights."

"Your suggestion is a good one and I'll follow it."

The officer summoned three policemen, who were sleeping in an adjoining room, and gave them explicit directions as to what they were to do. Then he despatched them, with Jack, to the scene of the proposed robbery.

CHAPTER IX.—A Desperate Affray.

Jack walked along with the policeman who was given charge of the squad, and during the walk told him a great deal about the crooks that he had had no opportunity to divulge to the officer in charge of the station house.

"You seem to be a smart young fellow," said the policeman. "You are bound to get a great deal of credit out of this night's work, which, together with what you did in connection with the Blackton Bank robbery, is sure to bring you into public notice. You'll have no difficulty in getting work in this town after the facts have appeared in the paper."

It took the party nearly an hour to reach Red Gables from the police station, and they entered the grounds with due caution, for it was not improbable that the three crooks had already arrived on the premises.

"The young chap named Swivel said that the iron bars guarding the kitchen windows were easy to force out of place," said Jack. "They will no doubt seek an entrance into the house that way. We had better examine those windows, and if they have not yet been tampered with it will be a sign that the crooks have not come yet."

The policeman in charge of the squad thought the boy's suggestion a good one, and so the party made its way to the back of the old turreted mansion where the kitchen was. One of the officers went forward and investigated the windows. He returned with word that none of the bars had been touched.

"Then we're ahead of the rascals," said the chief policeman. "It would be an advantage if we were inside the house, for there is no suitable place for us to conceal ourselves on the lawn hereabout. I'll go around in front and arouse somebody inside with as little noise as possible."

The officer went away, leaving Jack and the other two policemen standing in the shadow of the kitchen. After what seemed to be an endless interval the kitchen door was opened and the officer called to his companions and the boy to enter the house. The door was immediately closed and barred, and the head officer led the way to the dining-room, the windows of which were protected by steel shutters, that when closed gave the apartment the air of a hermetically sealed room. Every other room on the ground floor, except the kitchen, was similarly guarded against

invasion, the iron bars of that room being relied on as an ample barrier to surreptitious entry.

A little old, smooth-faced man, in a flowered dressing-gown, stood near the lamp which furnished illumination to the dining-room. This was Matthew Warden, who had been aroused by the officer's ringing at the front door-bell, and had descended to find out what his late visitor wanted. When he stated that he was a policeman sent on urgent business the old collector unbarred the front door and bade him enter. The officer then explained the situation in a few words. Mr. Warden led the way to the kitchen door and admitted Jack and the two policemen. Jack was then called upon to tell Mr. Warden how he found out that the house was to be robbed that night, and while he was telling his story the head officer sent his two companions into the kitchen to keep watch for the approach of the house-breakers. Matthew Warden was clearly disturbed as he listened to Jack's statement. When the boy had concluded he said:

"Young man, you have done me a great service in notifying the police and bringing a force here sufficient to cope with those rascals. I shall see that you lose nothing for putting yourself out in my interest. What is your name?"

Jack told him.

"Now, officer," said the old man, "you are at liberty to put in force any plan you may have formed for the capture of these burglars. I will assist you myself in every way I can. I presume you are armed?"

"Yes, sir," replied the policeman, "we have our revolvers and night-sticks."

"Here is a revolver for you, Gardiner," said the old gentleman, producing the weapon from one of the pockets of his dressing-gown and handing it to Jack. "I have its mate myself. The five of us ought to be able to capture the robbers. I hope we may be able to do it without arousing my niece and the two women servants on the top floor. I think we should be able to take the rascals by surprise after they have entered the kitchen."

"Yes, sir. That is my idea," replied the officer. "What time is it now?"

"Nearly two o'clock," replied Mr. Warden, nodding toward the handsome little ormolu clock that stood on the mantel, noting the fleeting seconds with a soft, musical sound.

"They should be here soon if they are coming tonight," said the policeman. "We will, if you please, turn the light down low and adjourn to the kitchen."

They found an officer stationed at each of the two windows, watching the lawn. They reported having seen nothing suspicious as yet. The chief officer placed one of his men behind the entry door and the other beneath the kitchen table. The old gentleman was directed to hide in the big closet near the pantry.

"Now, Gardiner, you keep watch from that window, and I will do the same from this. As soon as the rascals appear and begin work on the bars you retire to the entry, and be ready to rush out when I give the signal," said the policeman in charge.

"All right, sir," replied Jack.

For twenty minutes nothing turned up, and the kitchen was as silent as it was before the arrival of the party, then Jack made out a movement

among the trees on the edge of the lawn, and presently he saw three forms appear and advance toward the house.

"Here they come, sir," he whispered excitedly to the officer at the other window.

The policeman came over and looked out. He easily made out the three crooks in the semi-gloom of the lawn. The rascals approached the kitchen end of the building with some caution and stopped near one of the windows. Dick Swivel carried the black bag that Jack remembered well. After a short consultation Dick put the bag down, opened it and took from it a short steel implement. With this he commenced work on the cement that held one of the bars in place. It was old and crumbly and came away in chunks. After ten minutes labor Swivel pulled a heavy, short crowbar out of the bag and handed it to Cutcliffe. He placed it behind the weakened bar, and exerting his great strength, for he was a powerful man, bent the bar outward far enough to raise the weakened end out of its socket.

Working the bar back and forth he loosened the upper end, and finally pulled it out altogether. This programme was repeated on each of the four bars of that particular window, and then nothing opposed the rascals but the window sashes. A glazier's diamond was then brought into play by Cutcliffe while Swivel attached some kind of an adhesive pad to one of the panes. The English crook cut the glass all around, then gave it a smart rap and it came away without noise in Swivel's hand. For Cutcliffe to insert his arm through the opening and turn the catch was but the work of a moment. Then he cautiously raised the lower sash and thrust his head into the apparently tenantless room. To make sure that everything was all right before they ventured inside, the crook took an electric dark-lantern out of his pocket and flashed the light around the interior of the kitchen. He saw nothing that aroused his suspicion.

"Give me a lift, me covy, and in I go," he said to Dick Swivel.

Dick gave him the lift and he scrambled in through the window. The younger man followed, and the Mexican came last of all. On the principle that it is the part of wisdom to provide a ready avenue for escape in case of an emergency, Swivel removed the bar from the kitchen door, unlocked it, and left it ajar. The head officer, believing that the moment for action had now arrived, gave the signal and at the same time flashed his bull's-eye light on the burglars. To say that they were taken completely by surprise would but faintly describe their consternation on finding themselves confronted by three officers and two other persons all with pointed revolvers.

"Throw up your hands, my laddybucks!" cried the officer. "You're all pinched!"

Apparently the crooks had not the ghost of a show to evade the inevitable, and the cops expected little resistance from them. They didn't know how desperate and determined were the men they were dealing with. The officer's words acted like the touch of a galvanic battery on the momentarily stupefied crooks. Quick as a flash their hands sought their jacket pockets, three revolvers flashed in the electric light, and three weapons spoke almost as one. The three officers, whose revolvers also flashed simultaneously, went down, each struck by one of the bullets. The crooks

were unhurt by the balls that hummed close to their heads and buried themselves in the wood of the kitchen wall. Then it was that Jack, who had reserved his fire, covered Cutcliffe and pulled the trigger.

As the flash of the boy's weapon lit up the room the English crook fell with a groan. Guerrero raised his revolver to shoot Jack, whose form he only saw indistinctly, when Matthew Warden, from the shelter of the closet, fired at him. The bullet severed one of the Mexican's fingers, causing him to drop his weapon. With an imprecation in Spanish he shouted something. Dick Swivel, who was near the kitchen door, swung it open, and through this avenue of egress Guerrero and Swivel made their escape in a twinkling, followed by another bullet from Jack's revolver.

CHAPTER X.—Jack Accepts a Fine Offer.

Jack rushed after them and discharged his weapon at their disappearing forms, with what result he could not determine, but he did not believe that he had hit either of them. On his return to the kitchen he found that Mr. Warden had brought the lamp into the kitchen. Cutcliffe lay unconscious in the middle of the floor, while one of the policemen looked as if he might be badly wounded. The other two were standing up looking quite pale, and were examining their hurts, which were not serious. Jack helped them bind up their injuries, while the old gentleman was attending to the more seriously injured man. As soon as the officers had patched themselves up they turned their attention to Cutcliffe. He had a bullet in the chest and was a subject for a surgeon. The shooting had aroused the gardener and general utility man about the place, who slept in the second story of the carriage house. He dressed and came over to the house to see what was the matter. He was astonished when he saw the policemen and the wounded burglar in the kitchen.

"William," said Mr. Warden, "we have had a little trouble with burglars, and some of us have been hurt. Harness the gray mare to the light wagon and bring the team to the door."

Jack went with him to expedite matters. While they were harnessing the horse the boy told the gardener-coachman what had transpired.

"Two of the rascals made their escape, I'm sorry to say," concluded Jack. "One of them was the worst of the bunch, and I'd sooner see him behind the bars than the chap we caught, with the young fellow who got off to boot."

As soon as the wagon was brought to the door the wounded officer was lifted into it, together with the injured crook, still unconscious. One of the other policemen got in also and the head officer climbed up beside William on the seat. Jack was also about to get into the wagon when the master of the house detained him.

"You must stay here for the rest of the night, my lad, and after breakfast I shall want to talk with you more about those rascals who made this attempt on my house. I suppose you have no objection to accepting my hospitality?"

"Certainly not, sir, if you wish me to stay," replied Jack.

"That is settled then. Drive on, William."

The man touched up the horse and the wagon rolled away down the gravel path toward the main gate.

"What about this window, sir?" asked Jack, after shutting and barring the kitchen door.

"The only thing we can do is to board it up temporarily," replied the old gentleman. "There is plenty of wood in the cellar, and a hammer and nails."

Mr. Warden lighted the way with the lamp and Jack got the wood and the hammer and nails. While nailing the boards across the window he saw the burglars' black bag outside, containing their tools. As soon as he finished the job he went outside and got it.

"Even if these two rascals returned, which is hardly likely, they couldn't get in now without a tool of some kind to force those boards which I have nailed in a pretty solid way," he said to the old gentleman.

"I'm not afraid that we'll be disturbed again tonight," said Mr. Warden, in a confident tone. "Come, I will show you to a room upstairs, and you need not be in a hurry to get up in the morning. Judging from your story I believe you have nothing on hand for tomorrow that requires your attention."

"No, sir, I have not. I only reached this town last night at six o'clock, and have as yet had no chance to look for work."

"Then you came to Willowdale expecting to get work here?"

"Yes, sir; but I am not sure that I shall succeed."

"Perhaps I can put something in your way."

"If you can, sir, I shall be very much obliged to you."

"Well, we will talk about that tomorrow."

Mr. Warden showed him to a large, comfortable room, and wished him good-night.

"This is a whole lot better than the Lake House," thought Jack, as he looked around the spacious and well-furnished apartment. "The room I had there was a miserable little hole, hardly worth even the moderate price I paid for it. However, it was a good thing for this old gentleman that I put up here. If I hadn't been in a position to overhear the plans of those rascals they would probably have made a clean sweep of all Mr. Warden's treasured curiosities, and that would have been a terrible loss to him. I'm dead sorry that we failed to capture the Mexican. I don't mind Swivel getting off, for bad as he is he did me a good turn in Blackton; but Guerrero is a thoroughly wicked man, and ought to be put where he can do nobody any further harm."

By the time Jack finished his soliloquy he was ready to jump into bed. He was so tired that the late excitement did not keep him long awake, and inside of ten minutes he was sound asleep. Morning was well advanced when he awoke and found the sun streaming into the room. For a moment he gazed around in surprise at his surroundings, then the stirring events of the night crowded fast upon his mind, and he knew where he was, and how he came to be there. He got up and dressed himself. While he was combing his hair there came a knock at the door, and the little old gentleman walked in and wished him good-morning. Mr. Warden now looked like the refined and cultured gentleman he was.

He treated Jack in a kind and friendly way.

and they went down to the breakfast-room together, where the boy found a lovely young girl of perhaps seventeen standing by one of the windows that looked out on the broad, velvety lawn. As the master of the house entered the room, followed by Jack, she turned around and regarded the boy with not a little interest. The old gentleman had already told her under what obligations he was to Jack for saving the house from being robbed, which meant the looting of all his treasured possessions, and she felt almost as grateful to the young visitor as her uncle.

"My dear, this is Jack Gardiner, whom I spoke to you about a little while ago. Jack, my lad, this is my niece, Miss Dora Davenport."

The young people bowed and smiled, and said they were happy to make each other's acquaintance.

Mr. Warden took his place at the head of the table, Miss Dora sat at the foot where she presided over the coffer urn, and Jack took a seat on the side, midway between them. By the time the meal was over Jack felt quite at home among his new acquaintances. He was satisfied that Mr. Warden was an uncommonly fine old gentleman, and that Miss Dora was the nicest girl he had ever come in contact with. After breakfast the master of Red Gables invited Jack into his library.

"Well, my lad, will you tell me why you came to Willowdale in search of work, in preference to going to some more populated town? Willowdale is only a small place, and does not, I imagine, offer any great encouragement to an ambitious lad such as you seem to be."

"I came to Willowdale because I was told in Blackton that, being situated on the lake, it offered more chances of employment than most small towns," replied Jack.

"That is true if one is not particular what kind of work he takes up with."

"I'm willing to do anything that's honest to earn a living."

"Am I to understand that you have no parents, and that you are entirely dependent on your own exertions for a livelihood?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you been providing for yourself?"

"Ever since my mother died, about four years."

"Have you no relatives at all?"

"None that have shown any interest in me."

"How have you made a living since your mother died?"

"In many ways," replied Jack, and he mentioned several of the positions he had filled at different times. "I had a particularly hard time of it during the first two years," he continued. "When I walked into Wallingford Christmas morning I was about down and out. If a man named Andrew Marven had not given me shelter I guess I should have seen my finish then and there. He took a fancy to me and offered me a home, though he was not very well off himself. I accepted his offer, but practically kept the pot boiling myself, though I scarcely had a steady job all the time I lived in Wallingford. Finally Andrew Marven took sick and the doctor I got for him did him no real good, so that he just lingered on till he died a week or so ago. As soon as he was buried I started out to find a job on a farm somewhere."

"A job on a farm!" ejaculated the old gentleman.

"Yes, sir, that was my idea, though I had never worked on a farm in my life. It was while walking into Blackton that I made the acquaintance of one of the crooks who tried to rob your house early this morning."

"Indeed!"

Jack then detailed the particulars of his acquaintance with Dick Swivel. To this he added the story of the robbery of the Blackton Bank by the same three crooks concerned in the attempted burglary of Red Gables. He astonished Mr. Warden with the narrative of how he had recovered all the stolen bank funds, returned the money to the bank, and received a reward of \$1,000 which he had deposited in the Blackton Savings Bank.

"Then I started yesterday afternoon for Willowdale, and that brings me down to the point where, as I related to you this morning in the dining-room, I discovered the plans of the three crooks to rob your house," concluded Jack.

"The active interest you took in saving my property from the hands of the despoilers has placed me under the deepest of obligations to you. Under such circumstances I shall not be satisfied until I have done something to testify my appreciation for your services. Now I doubt much if you would be willing to accept a money consideration."

"No, sir, I should not accept any pay from you for what I did. It was my duty to try and save your property the moment I became aware of the purpose of those rascals. You are welcome to my small services in the matter."

"You underestimate your services when you call them small. It would have been a very serious matter to me indeed if those men had carried my treasure away and thus have destroyed one of the most unique private collections of antiques in this country, for, remember, those rascals, knowing that it would be a dangerous matter for them to try and dispose of the articles as they stood, would have broken up and melted curios worth thousands owing to their rarity in order to obtain the gold and silver metal that was worth only hundreds."

Jack was willing to admit that the looting of Mr. Warden's strong room would have been a real misfortune, in more senses than one.

"Now, my lad, to get down to business, how would you like a situation in this house?" said Mr. Warden.

"A situation in this house?" ejaculated Jack.

"Yes, as my secretary and general assistant."

"If I could fill the bill I'd like it first-class; but I'm afraid——"

"You can fill the bill all right," replied the old gentleman, in a confident tone. "Your duties will be light. Chiefly to assist me in cataloguing my collection of curios. Two hours a day at the outside will be all I shall require of your. The rest of your time will be at your own disposal. The fact of the matter is, my boy, I have taken a liking to you, and I think you will make an excellent companion for my niece, who, I am afraid, finds Red Gables rather a lonesome spot without some one of her own age to consort with. What do you say to my offer? Will you accept it, and make the Gables your home till further notice? Your remuneration will be \$30 a month, the

greater part of which you ought to be able to save."

"It seems too good to be true," replied the delighted boy; "but if you really think you can make use of me I shall gladly accept your offer."

"Then I consider the matter settled. We will now go to town, for we have to appear at the examination of that rascal we captured, that is, if he is in a condition to be brought into court to-day. The carriage will be around in a few moments, so go upstairs and get your hat."

Jack did so and twenty minutes later he and Mr. Warden were being driven toward Willowdale.

CHAPTER XI.—Jack Becomes A Land-Owner.

On their arrival at the police court they found that Cutcliffe was under the care of the police surgeon and would not be in shape for a week to appear for examination.

Mr. Warden and Jack then drove around to the police station to find out if any efforts had been made to capture the Mexican and young Swivel.

They learned that several officers were out on the case.

"Now we'll go to the Lake House and get your suitcase," said the old gentleman to Jack.

As soon as the suitcase was in the buggy they started back for Red Gables, where they arrived in time for lunch. Dora Davenport, who had been quite taken with Jack Gardiner, was delighted to learn that the boy was going to live at the house in the capacity of literary assistant to Mr. Warden. She had long yearned for the companionship of somebody about her own age, and now this new arrangement filled the bill to her satisfaction.

"I am ever so glad you are going to stay with us, Mr. Gardiner," she said after lunch. "Your presence here will make the house a little more lively."

"I am glad, too, that I am going to stay," replied the boy. "I mean to do everything I can to give satisfaction to Mr. Warden."

"You will find him easy to please. He is a nice old gentleman."

"I think he is myself."

"He is greatly wrapped up in his curios. He has spent a fortune on them, and he still has agents on the lookout for rare coins and other antiques."

"And some day when he dies what do you suppose will become of them? Will they be sold to the highest bidder?"

"No. He has willed his collection to the State with the understanding that they are to be kept intact and placed on free exhibition for the benefit of the public."

"He is a liberty-minded old gentleman, isn't he?"

"Yes. He takes a great pride in his collection, and he doesn't want it scattered broadcast after his death."

Dora described many of the articles that her uncle had accumulated, and then remarked that Mr. Warden would probably show his treasures to Jack in a day or two. She then took the boy around the grounds, and he found that Mr. Warden's estate was quite extensive, extending for a quarter of a mile along the lake front, where it ended at the foot of a high bluff overlooking the

water. Perched on the top of the bluff was an old, weather-beaten two-story building.

"Who lives there?" asked Jack.

"Nobody," answered Dora.

"The bluff, you say, doesn't belong to Mr. Warden?"

"No. Our property ends at this wire fence."

"I suppose the person who owns the bluff can't find a tenant for the house?"

"Nobody knows who the owner of the bluff is, and nobody seems to care. That house was there when Mr. Warden bought this property. In fact, it's been there so long that nobody seems to know when it was built."

"Let's go up and look at it," said Jack.

He helped Dora over the fence and to the top of the bluff they went. The house was a substantial structure and had stood the weather mighty well, considering that it hadn't been painted or repaired within the memory of the oldest resident of that locality. The glass in the front windows, that faced the lake and consequently were exposed to the full sweep of the winds across that big body of water, were broken or cracked in the majority of cases; but those in the rear, where a small one-story extension jutted out from the main building, were in good shape. Jack tried the doors and found them all locked or otherwise secured.

The window sashes were also immovable, so that there was no way of getting into the building without breaking in, and nobody had attempted to do that yet, during all the years the house had stood untenanted. In fact, nobody in the vicinity took enough interest in the building to consider it worth exploring.

"I should think that if the owner was alive he would either make use of his property or sell it for what it might fetch," remarked Jack, as he and Dora stood gazing at the old structure. "I don't see any sense in a solid-looking house like that being abandoned to go to ruin."

"My uncle thinks the owner is dead and that he left no heirs," said the girl.

"I guess he's right. In that case it's a wonder the property hasn't been sold for taxes."

"The county has just advertised it for sale for thirty years' unpaid taxes. It will come under the hammer day after tomorrow."

"That so? How much property goes with the house?"

"Just the bluff and the land in a straight line as far as the road, about ten acres altogether."

"Do you know if it goes cheap I'd like to buy it."

"You would?" Dora cried in some astonishment.

"Yes. I'd like to own a piece of ground facing on the lake like this does. I've an idea I could make money out of it one of these days."

"How could you? This is nearly two miles from town, and I don't believe you could get anybody to come here and live. If you have any money I think you would be foolish to invest it in this place."

"That is where you and I differ, Miss Dora. I have an idea this would make an ideal location for a summer hotel. If I owned the property I'd advertise it for sale for that purpose, and I think I could make a good profit out of my investment."

"You might do that," replied Dora thoughtfully.

"I have \$1,000 in the Blackton Savings Bank.

I'd be willing to put that, or a part of it, in this land, and then see if I could sell it for double at least of what I paid for it. There are lots of ways of making money in this world, and that is one way to my thinking. I have a great mind to speak to Mr. Warden about it."

"You can do so. He would help you if he thought it was to your interest."

They talked the matter over a while longer, Jack growing quite enthusiastic over the project, and then they returned to Red Gables.

Mr. Warden was sitting on the veranda overlooking the lake when they came up. He wanted to know where they had been and Jack told him. Dora went inside and left them talking.

"Would you like to see my collection of coins and antiques?" asked the old gentleman at length.

"Yes, sir; very much indeed," replied Jack.

The master of the house got up and led the way to his library. The strong room where his collection was kept was right off the library, and protected by a steel door with a combination lock like a safe. The old gentleman opened the door and ushered Jack inside the doom. It was very dark, as there were no windows to it. Mr. Warden soon threw light on the subject by pulling down an old-fashioned bronze lamp, which hung from the center of the ceiling, and igniting its wick. It threw a soft glow about the apartment.

"This lamp came from an ancient tomb in Egypt. It is 3,000 years old at least, and I purchased it for \$10,000. I consider it a bargain, for I could get twice that sum for it from any museum in the country. Indeed, I was offered 4,000 pounds for it by a representative of the British Museum as soon as he inspected it."

Jack looked at the old metal lamp in great wonder. He saw that it seemed to be a sort of well or receptacle in which a peculiar-looking wick floated upon the surface of the oil. His attention, however, was soon attracted to other things equally as odd, and as he went from one article to another Mr. Warden gave him a brief history of the article with its age and the amount it had cost its present owner. Altogether, the collection of vases, statuettes, brass, bronze and stone ornaments, carved silver dishes of the fifteenth and later centuries, and an endless variety of small articles of every conceivable shape, was most interesting and remarkable.

Then Mr. Warden unlocked his cabinet of rare coins—gold, silver, brass, bronze and iron specimens, of varying shape, size and thickness. He took out the rarest of these and showed them to Jack, explaining their history and value, reserving the balance for another occasion, as it was close on to the tea hour.

After the meal, while Jack and the old gentleman were sitting on the veranda in the gathering dusk, looking out across the dark green waters of the lake, the boy brought up the subject of the ten-acre piece of ground with its house on the top of the bluff. He surprised Mr. Warden by saying that he was really anxious to become the owner of it if he could get it cheap, and he thought he could if it was to be sold for the taxes, which could not amount to such a big sum even in thirty years, with the interest added.

He explained the object he had in view of ultimately disposing of it as a site for a summer hotel, and the old gentleman began to see that there was a whole lot of method in what he first

took to be the boy's madness. In fact, Jack talked Mr. Warden over to his way of thinking.

"I've no doubt it could be bought in for less than \$1,000," said the old gentleman, "but the difficulty that confronts you, my lad, is that being under age you could not legally acquire real estate in your own name."

That was a dampener for Jack, and it looked as if his scheme was nipped in the bud.

"Still that could be got around," said Mr. Warden.

"How?" asked Jack eagerly.

"I could take over the title in my own name for you."

"Could you, sir?"

"Certainly. I could have myself appointed your guardian in order to hold the property in your interest."

"Would you do that?"

"To be sure I would. I'll tell you what I'll do. I think so well of your plan that I will attend the sale of this property and buy it in if it goes cheap. Whatever sum it costs you can repay me out of your savings bank account. Then I will make arrangements about the guardianship, and you can consider the land your own."

Jack was delighted with this arrangement, was duly carried out, the property going at auction for about \$800, which amount Jack drew from the Blackton Savings Bank and paid over to Mr. Warden.

He was now to all intents and purposes the owner of the bluff, the house upon it, and the ten acres of ground attached, and very proud he was of the fact.

CHAPTER XII.—Trying To Read The Puzzle Of The Copper Coin.

A week from the day that Jack became an inmate of Red Gables, Cutcliffe, the English crook, was so far recovered from his wound that he was able to present himself in the police court for examination.

Jack and Mr. Warden were notified to be present to give their evidence.

A close search had in the meantime been made for the Mexican and Dick Swivel, but nothing came of it, though the police of the towns north and south of Willowdale, as well as in the interior, had been notified to be on the lookout for the rascals. The testimony of Jack, Mr. Warden and the three policeman who had accompanied the boy to Red Gables the morning of the projected burglary, was sufficient to make a strong case out against Cutcliffe, and he was held for trial at the next term of the circuit court.

Jack got on very nicely with Mr. Warden. With the boy's assistance the little old gentleman began to make up a catalogue of his curios. Jack and the old gentleman worked at this catalogue about two hours every morning, usually from ten to twelve—the rest of the day the boy could put in as he chose. As a rule he spent the greater part of his leisure time in Dora's society. They now addressed each other as Jack and Dora, and were quite sure that the company of the other was indispensable to their complete happiness. They had got into the habit of frequently visiting the bluff, for Jack said that nothing pleased him better than to walk about on his own property

and figure on what he expected to do with it some day in the near future. They had both been through the house from cellar to garret, and had found the rooms filled with the dust of years, while the cellar and the garret were thick with dirty festoons of cobwebs.

"I'll have the building cleaned out some day," he said; "but for the present things will have to remain as they are."

One bright, sunny afternoon Jack and Dora tramped gaily over to the bluff and took their seats on a big stone at the back of the house. From this point they could look out over the lake around the corner of the house, while in the other direction they had a fine sweeping view of the countryside for miles around. As they sat there in the sunshine it occurred to Jack to tell Dora about the strange legacy he had received from Andrew Marven, and to show her the coin which was supposed to contain the clue to a considerable treasure. So he told the girl about that night of storm and darkness when the angel of death was hovering above that miserable little cottage on the outskirts of Wallingford. He narrated how the dying man had called him to the bed and handed him the curious-looking old English coin, one side of which had been smoothed down and then covered with letters and figures whose arrangement appeared to have no meaning whatever.

"Andrew Marven told me that he tried for fifteen years to find out the meaning of those letters and figures, but was unable to discover the key to the puzzle. He said they furnished the clue to a large treasure, and that he knew of only one man able to read their meaning?"

"Who was that?"

"You'll be astonished when I tell you that the man is the Mexican crook the police have been recently looking for in connection with the attempted burglary of the Gables."

"Is it possible?" she exclaimed. "How do you know he is the man?"

"Andrew Marven told me so, and, besides, he turned up at the cottage that night in company with the Englishman now in jail. His object in coming there was to get possession of the copper coin Marven had given me only a little while before. He had followed Marven for years from place to place for the sole purpose of securing that coin with its jumble of letters and figures, but Marven had always managed to outwit him."

"Have you that coin with you? I should like to see it."

"I carry it all the time attached to a cord around my neck," replied Jack.

He put his fingers under his collar and pulled out the George III copper coin.

"It's a heavy coin, isn't it? I should hate to have to carry many of those around in my pocket all day," laughed Jack as Dora took it in her fingers to examine.

"Do you really believe that this odd arrangement of letters and figures forms a clue to a real treasure?"

"I've Andrew Marven's word for it that it does. That is all I know about it."

"How did he know that these letters and figures have reference to a treasure?"

"Give it up. That is something he didn't tell me."

"Then you don't know how the coin came into his possession?"

"I do not."

Dora studied the figures and letters attentively for some moments.

This was the way the puzzle ran:

H on B 2 m NW fr W
2 F NE fr SE c H
T b d N D 5 f
2 N 1 8 7 6

"H on B 2 m NW fr W," she said, reading the first line across the coin. "Now what can that mean?"

"That's what I'd like to know," laughed Jack. "If you and I could put any sense in that we could probably decipher the other lines."

"It looks to me as if it really means something," said Dora.

"That's my opinion, too. I don't believe anybody would go to all the trouble of smoothing down one side of a copper coin, and then tracing those letters and figures on the surface without there was some reason for it. It took a whole lot of time and practice to accomplish that work, and it must have been done with a purpose."

"Do you know puzzles of this kind interest me," said the girl. "When we get back to the house I want you to copy those four lines for me. I'm going to study them. I once discovered the meaning of a pretty difficult cryptogram for my uncle after working over it for a month."

"Did you?" asked Jack eagerly.

"Yes. I might have been a year at it or more if I hadn't accidentally discovered the key one day. After that it was simply a matter of patience."

"Do you think this is a cryptogram?"

"No, it doesn't look like one."

"Have you any idea what it is?"

"I imagine the letters may stand for words."

"If that is so it would be like hunting for a needle in a haystack to discover the words they stand for. H might stand for any of a thousand different words, such as horse, house——"

"House!" cried Dora. "That sounds pretty good. House on B. Now what does B stand for?"

"If it referred to this house of mine behind us it would mean bluff, for this house is on a bluff, don't you see?" grinned Jack. "If I can't do any better I can make a good bluff at reading the puzzle," he added with a chuckle.

Dora didn't laugh. With knitted brow she sat staring at the letters as though her life depended on unraveling their meaning.

"Two m might mean two miles. House on bluff two miles NW from W."

"By George!" cried Jack excitedly. "I believe you're getting it. NW looks to me like northwest. House on bluff two miles northwest from W. If that is right W would stand for some locality, say the name of a town of vil——"

"Why not Willowdale?" exclaimed the girl with glistening eyes.

"Why should it mean Willowdale? There are a million other places that begin with a W, Wallingford, for instance, where Andrew Marven and I lived for two years. He may have come to Wallingford because he was able to make out that first line himself."

"No," replied Dora in some excitement, "it must

mean Willowdale, or else we have hit accidentally upon a most remarkable coincidence."

"How do you make that out?"

"Lister. House on bluff, two miles northwest from Willowdale. That seems to fit the first line, doesn't it?" cried the clever girl.

"I admit it does; but where's the coincidence?"

"Why, this house of yours is on a bluff just two miles in a northwesterly direction from Willowdale."

"Jumping grasshoppers!" almost shouted Jack. "So it is. Can it be that we've struck the meaning at the first trial?"

"I don't know," replied the girl, "but our reading certainly corresponds to facts that cannot be disputed. We mustn't be too sanguine, for the real significance of those letters may mean something entirely different to the translation we are giving it. To think we have hit on the actual sense of that line is almost too remarkable to be depended on."

"That's so," admitted Jack. "It doesn't seem reasonable to me. If that inscription is meant to point out the locality of a buried treasure, it is almost absurd to suppose that the treasure is buried on property that practically came into my possession through accident. However, let us see if we can make any sense of the next line on the same principle."

CHAPTER XIII.—Dick Swivel And The Mexican.

They continued the study of the puzzle with their heads very close together.

"If 'NW' on the first line really means northwest," said Jack, "then we may reasonably assume that 'NE' and 'SE' on the second line mean northeast and southeast."

"And if 'fr' on the first line means from, it means the same in the second line," said Dora.

"That would make the line read 'Two f (say feet) northeast from southeast c H.' Now what does 'c H' mean?"

"If 'H' on the top line means house it might mean the same in the second line," responded the girl.

"Well, if 'H' means house what does the small 'c' mean?"

"A small 'c' stands as an accepted abbreviation for corner," said Dora, after some moments' thought.

"Then the line would read 'Two feet in a northeasterly direction from the southeast corner of the house.' There's good sense in that, all right," said Jack, both excited and encouraged by the progress they had apparently made in deciphering the odd inscription on the coin.

Jack took out a pencil and a small memorandum book and wrote down their translation of the two lines as follows:

"House on bluff two miles northwest from Willowdale.

"Two feet northeast from the southeast corner of the house."

Then they applied themselves to the elucidation of the third line.

But here they were badly stuck. The only thing that seemed at all plain was the "5 f," which they thought meant five feet.

"What 'T b d N D' stood for they couldn't make out at all.

"We are up against it for fair in this line," said Jack.

"If at first you don't succeed, try try again," laughed Dora.

"This isn't a case of if at the first time you don't succeed, but if at the hundredth time you don't make out keep on trying till you do if you become half-headed during the job."

"Perseverance always conquers."

"Generally it does, but not always. I've read of instances where perseverance got lost in the shuffle."

"Well, we've got lots of time to study this out. It isn't as if this was the only afternoon we had to do it in. I tell you what we'll do, Jack. We must work at this puzzle separately as well as together. Just make me out a copy of the inscription, and write underneath it the meaning we've given to the two lines, and then I'll see what I can do with it myself."

"All right," replied Jack, and he did as she requested.

"It would be remarkable if you found this treasure on your own land, wouldn't it?" Dora said.

"Rather remarkable. Such things only happen in story books."

"Truth, they say, is stranger than fiction, Jack."

"Once in a while it is, but not as a rule. Now, I tell you what I'm going to do. William has a small compass in his room. I'm going to borrow it, fetch it out here and take the bearings of this house of mine. I might even go to the trouble of digging a hole two feet to the northeast of the southeast corner just to see what would result."

"This is the southeast corner," said Dora, pointing to the corner of the building nearest to where they sat.

"I'd hardly need to measure two feet to the northeast. All I'd have to do would be to dig a hole in a northeasterly direction. I think I'll do that tomorrow. It will be a great deal easier than puzzling my brains over the inscription."

"Maybe the 'T' which begins the third line stands for that old walnut tree yonder," said Dora thoughtfully. "If I was going to bury a treasure I'd conceal it at the base of such a tree as that."

"You may be right, but that doesn't make the line any clearer reading."

They worked a while longer at the problem without any additional success and then gave it up for the time being. Dora applied herself to the puzzle that evening while Jack talked with Mr. Warden in his library on topics connected with his curios.

On the following afternoon Jack and Dora went to the bluff again. He carried a shovel over his shoulder and a compass under one arm. The compass showed that the house faced almost due west, which caused one of the corners to point southeast. Jack located a spot two feet to the northeast from that corner and started to dig. Dora watched him with great interest. With intervals of rest he kept on for an hour, by which time he had dug down to a depth of about six feet. Another hour was spent in widening the hole. He had the labor for nothing, for dirt only rewarded his trouble.

"Unless I haven't dug deep enough there is evidently nothing buried two feet in a northeasterly direction from the southeast corner of this house," he said, somewhat ruefully, for he was disappointed with the result. "I guess we haven't read that puzzle right."

Jack put the shovel and the compass in the house and he and Dora started for a stroll.

"It's my opinion that my strange legacy will amount to nothing. Wherever that alleged treasure is buried it's going to remain as far as I am concerned."

"Don't give up your anticipations so soon. Remember that one failure does not signify ultimate non-success. We may be able to make that inscription read as clear as noonday. I believe we've hit upon the right meaning of the first two lines. If we haven't I don't see how we have been able to make such good sense out of them."

"But I have proved that there is nothing buried two feet from the house in a northeasterly direction."

"The reading we made does not actually indicate that anything is buried two feet from the southeast corner. The third line may show where the digging ought to be done."

Jack pulled out the coin and they looked at the third line with fresh interest.

"'T' doesn't stand for tree, but treasure, I'll bet," cried Jack suddenly. "And what's the matter with 'b' standing for buried? That gives us 'treasure buried,' which is a good start. Now, if we can guess what the small 'd' stands for we might get a line on the capitals 'N D.' As far as the '5 f' goes, I'm satisfied that it means five feet."

Jack's argument appeared to be good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough to let light in on the riddle. While they were figuring on the matter they did not notice that a very bright pair of eyes were observing them from a thick bunch of bushes on the edge of the bluff. These eyes belonged to no less a personage than Dick Swivel. The young man looked as if nothing would suit him better than to sit down to a square meal. Just at present he was the picture of hard luck. The strenuous experience of trying to keep clear of the police evidently did not agree with him. He was not close enough to Jack and Dora to hear what they said, but he saw that both were much interested in the copper coin Jack wore around his neck.

The Mexican, whom we may as well admit was in hiding close by, had not mentioned anything to Swivel about the copper penny he was so eager to secure, so Dick was not particularly interested in the coin Jack wore about his neck. What bothered him most at that moment was whether Jack and the girl proposed to wander around among the rocks of the bluff to any extent. If they did they might discover the little cabin in an indentation of the beach below where he and Guerrero were keeping under cover.

Dick concluded that as the case stood it would be the part of wisdom to warn the Mexican of their presence. So he cautiously made his way down the face of the bluff until he reached the nook in the shore where the cabin stood. He found Guerrero sitting lazily on a rock, with his customary cigarette between his perfect white teeth, sunning himself like a lizard in the afternoon glow. The Mexican opened his eyes on hear-

ing his companion's footsteps. "Who do you s'pose is on the top of the bluff near that house?" said Swivel.

"Who—the cops?" asked Guerrero, showing sudden animation.

"No. I don't believe the police are any nearer to us at present than Willowdale."

"Who then, Senor Dick?"

"Jack Gardiner, the lad who is responsible for all our recent troubles."

"Carramba! That boy!" cried the Mexican with a malevolent look that evidently boded no good for Jack.

"Yes, and he's got a girl with him—the girl of the house we failed to rob. He feathered his nest well when he put a spoke in our little game."

"What is he doing on the bluff?"

"Well, they had their heads pretty close together. He was showin' her somethin' he carries around his neck—a copper coin it looked to—"

"What!" roared the Mexican. "A copper coin? You are sure, Senor Dick?" and he seized the young crook by the arm with a grip that made him wince.

"That copper coin shall be worth a fortune to us, Senor Dick," said Guerrero, in a tone so earnest as to command his associate's attention.

"A fortune!"

"Si, senor. That coin will tell me where there is buried \$100,000 in good money of these United States."

"How the dickens can it tell that?"

"You shall see as soon as I get the coin."

"Where is it buried?"

"Somewhere around this end of the lake. Perhaps on this bluff above."

"And you want me to help you get that coin from Jack Gardiner?"

"Si, senor. You must."

"Then there is only one thing to be done for our own safety. We must capture both Gardiner and the girl. They must be shut up in the hut while we are looking for this treasure. Should we let them escape they'd notify the police of our whereabouts."

"Leave them to me, Senor Dick. They shall not escape me."

"Hist! Here they come now, down the rocks. We must hide or they will see us."

The Mexican glanced up the bluff.

"Come. We will get behind yonder boulder. When I shall say the word we will rush out and take them by surprise. I will attend to the boy. Do you look after the girl."

"I'll see she doesn't get away or make any outcry, though there isn't likely to be anybody around this bluff to hear her if she did scream. Still I always like to be on the safe side."

They crept behind the boulder in question and waited the coming of Jack and Dora, who, little suspecting that the two crooks the police wanted were in hiding close by, came down the rocks hand in hand as happy as two children.

CHAPTER XIV.—Jack And Dora Made Prisoners.

Slowly Jack and Dora approached the boulder behind which Guerrero and Swivel were concealed.

"Hello!" exclaimed the boy. "There's a hut

down here. Guess nobody lives in it, though. Did you know it was there, Dora?"

"No. I have never been down here before."

"Well, we'll take a peep into the cabin and see what it looks like inside."

As they stepped past the boulder Dick Swivel and the Mexican rose suddenly and confronted them.

"Aha! Senor Gardiner, this shall be a pleasant surprise," said Guerrero with an evil grin. "You have made us a call, eh? And with a lady, too. Madre de Dios! I am glad that we meet once more. There is a debt of some size that I wish to repay, and I shall not forget to do it with interest. That can wait, Senor Gardiner. What I wish now is that copper penny you got from Senor Marven. You will hand it over at once, or shall I take it myself?"

He bent a sinister look on Jack as he advanced upon him. The boy had been dumbfounded at the unexpected encounter with the Mexican, whom he believed to be many miles from that vicinity.

He could only stand and stare at the rascal in a dazed way.

When Guerrero stopped speaking and started for him the spell was broken.

"Stand back, Guerrero!" he cried resolutely. "If you know when you're well off you won't molest us."

The Mexican laughed sardonically.

"Look to the girl, Senor Dick," he said to the young crook.

Then with a rush he threw himself on Jack and bore him to the beach.

"Run back to the bluff, Dora, and give the alarm," cried Jack as he struggled in the arms of the Mexican.

Although Dora might have attempted to retreat before Swivel reached her she did not try to do so. She was a plucky girl, and would not desert her companion in the face of danger. Stooping down she picked up a sharp piece of stone and threw it straight at Guerrero. It struck the rascal in the face, inflicting an ugly gash.

"Carramba!" he cried furiously. "You shall pay dear for that. Why you do not seize her, Senor Dick?"

Dora picked up a second stone and threw it at Swivel as he made a dart at her. He dodged quickly and the stone missed his head by a hair. In another moment he had his arms around the brave girl. She uttered one shrill scream and then he choked off further utterance on her part by placing one of his hands over her mouth. Guerrero and the young crook dragged their prisoners into the small hut made out of the timbers of some wrecked craft, and which was propped against an indentation of the bluff out of sight of the lake. They were quickly bound and gagged and when this was accomplished the Mexican tore the copper coin from Jack's neck and gazed at it with the greatest satisfaction.

"At last!" he exclaimed with glittering eyes. "I search for this for fifteen years, now I have it."

"So that is the key to a fortune, Guerrero?" said the young crook.

"Si," replied the Mexican.

"Where is the secret?"

"Here," answered Guerrero, pointing at the four lines of inscription.

"What! Those letters and figures?"

The Mexican nodded and said:

"This fortune was buried by a smuggler. Both I and Andrew Marven were in his crew. He alone knew where the treasure was buried and had the directions engraved on a coin so he would have a record. I engraved it, and know roughly what it meant. The smuggler afterward was robbed of the coin by Marven, who could not decipher it. The smuggler was killed. I forget what the coin said. By recovering the coin I knew I could locate the treasure. I hunted for years to find Marven and get the coin away from him."

"Can you read that jumble?" asked Dick.

"Leave that to me, señor."

"If you can put any sense to them you're a good one, Guerrero," replied Swivel.

"I can do it."

"Then you'd better do it right away, for we haven't any time to waste. Gardiner and the girl will be missed before many hours and a search will be made for them. We must secure this treasure and be away from here before that happens."

The Mexican agreed with his companion, but said it would be too risky to dig for the treasure before dark.

"It's lucky that we have a shovel and a lantern here, or I don't see how we could do any digging," said Swivel. "While we're waitin' you'd better unravel those letters and figures."

The Mexican took a paper and pencil from his pocket. After studying the puzzle for a while he began to write down the meaning of it. Jack and Dora, to whom no attention was paid, looked on from the corner of the hut where they had been placed. At last Guerrero finished.

"I will read it to you, Señor Dick," he said. "Listen."

The young crook gave his earnest attention.

"First line it shall say, 'House on bluff two miles northwest from W.'"

"What's 'D'?" asked Swivel.

"Only that we are here on the spot I would not know off-hand. It shall mean Willowdale, as this bluff is two miles northwest from that town and has a house on it."

"That's right," nodded Swivel. "Then the treasure is on the top of this bluff?"

"Si, Señor Dick."

"Well, go on."

"The second and third lines show where we are to dig."

"Do they? That's good."

"The treasure is buried two fathoms northeast from the southeast corner of the house with tree bearing due north. It is five feet deep."

"Two fathoms. What's two fathoms?"

"Twelve feet. It is a sea term."

"What do you mean by 'tree bearin' due north?'" asked Swivel.

"I will show you when we go up there."

"How are you goin' to find out north and south-east? We ain't got a compass."

"We must go up to the top of the bluff and take our bearings by the sun. That should bring us near enough."

"What does that '2 N 1876' mean?"

"That means the date when the treasure was buried—November 2, 1876."

After making sure that their prisoners' were securely tied they left the hut.

CHAPTER XV.—Jack's Fortune.

Left by themselves in the hut, the door of which the rascals took the precaution to secure on the outside, Jack and Dora looked at each other. It was all they could do, for the gags prevented them from talking, and as they had been secured to two of the posts that supported the roof of the cabin they could not move. Both realized that they were in a tight fix from which they did not see how they could extricate themselves. Jack, however, was not a boy to give up without a big struggle. The first thing he did as soon as the Mexican and Swivel had left the hut was to make an attempt to free himself from his bonds. In this he was not very successful, as the rascals had tied him pretty securely. He kept working away, however, hoping that he would eventually succeed.

An hour passed away and the two rascals did not return. Jack judged that they must have had some trouble in locating the exact spot where the treasure was buried. At length the sun went down, and the hut, being situated in a secluded nook in the bluff, the interior of it grew dark quickly. Just as Jack was beginning to feel discouraged one of the cords gave enough for him to slip his right hand out of the loop that held it. He quickly tore the gag from his mouth. He got his knife out of his pocket and cut the rest of the cords in short order. Rushing to where the girl was secured he first relieved her of the gag and then released her from the post.

"What a terrible experience!" he ejaculated. "Do you think we can escape from this hut? I'm afraid they fastened the door on the outside."

"I dare say I'll be able to break my way through the boards of the hut somehow," he said, after making sure that the door was fastened on the other side.

Pulling out his match-safe he struck a light and looked around the cabin to see if there was any kind of an implement he could use on the boards. Seeing a lantern he lighted it and that helped his search. There was nothing in the hut but an old shovel, some pieces of driftwood, some rope and various odds and ends. There was nothing suitable for smashing in the boards with which the hut was built. At that moment Jack's sharp ears heard the voices of the two rascals outside.

"What are we going to do?" asked Dora, grasping Jack by the arm. "They'll tie us up again as soon as they find we are free."

"Are you game to help me make a break for liberty?" asked the boy.

"Yes. Anything rather than remain a prisoner here any longer."

"All right. Here, take this piece of wood. It's as good as a club. I'll take this one. You stand on one side of the door. I'll stand on the other. The moment they enter I'll hit the first one and you strike at the other. I'll back you up if your aim isn't good. It will take a little nerve on your part, but it is our only show to escape."

"I'll do my part," replied Dora resolutely.

Jack blew out the lantern light and they took their places on either side of the door as they heard one of the men on the outside unfastening it. A minute later the door opened and in walked the Mexican first. Whack! Jack felled him to the ground with a heavy blow. Dick Swivel was close behind him, and before he could recover from

his surprise at Guerrero's fall Dora's stick caught him alongside the head and he went down, too. Her blow was not very effective, and Jack had to hand him one to keep him quiet.

"Set the rope that was used to tie us, Dora, so we can make these chaps prisoners."

She brought it, and Jack speedily tied Swivel hand and foot. He fixed the Mexican the same way, and relieved him of the copper coin which he found in his pocket. He relighted the lantern, and taking it in his hand called Dora to follow him. He was satisfied the crooks would not be able to escape from the hut, and he intended to have the police of Willowdale notified at once of their whereabouts. With the aid of the lantern light Jack and Dora soon made their way to the top of the bluff. Jack flashed the lantern around the rear of the house to see what the crooks had been up to with respect to the treasure. He found that they had discovered the compass and shovel he had brought out there that afternoon, that they had located a spot about twelve feet from the house, and in line with the old walnut tree, and that they had done considerable digging. They had left the shovel sticking in the hole, intending to return after visiting the hut, maybe, for the lantern. The sight of the hole, dug to the depth of about three feet, fired Jack's anticipations of the treasure. He determined to stay there and finish the job, sending Dora to the Gables.

"Dora, you don't mind returning to the house alone, do you?" he said.

"No; but what are you going to do here?"

"I'm going to finish the digging for that treasure."

Dora set off at once, and Jack, putting down the lantern, commenced working in the hole where the treasure was supposed to be. In half an hour his shovel struck an obstruction. He flashed the lantern into the hole and saw that he had struck a small brass-bound box.

"I've reached the treasure sure!" he cried gleefully. "Now all I've got to do is to land it on the surface."

Unaware that there was trouble brewing for him close by, Jack jumped into the hole again to put in the finishing strokes of his work. While he had been absorbed with his treasure digging Dick Swivel had managed to free himself in the hut at the foot of the bluff. He quickly released the Mexican, who had recovered his senses, and the two, satisfied that the police would soon be after them, started for the top of the bluff to finish digging for the treasure so that they could make off with it. To their surprise when they reached the scene of operations they saw Jack Gardiner at work in the hole.

"Carramba!" cried Guerrero. "He has found the treasure."

"So much the better," replied Swivel. "He has saved us a lot of time and trouble. Don't you see he is alone? All we have to do is to capture him. This old tablecloth I brought to wrap the money in will do to smother him in till we can tie and gag him. Then we'll shove him into the house and make off with the treasure."

As Jack, after great exertion, landed the heavy brass-bound box on the surface, the two crooks, who had been furtively watching him at work, sprang forward, the one in advance enveloping the boy in the folds of the tablecloth. Their triumph, however, was but short-lived. At that mo-

ment Mr. Warden, a neighbor, and Dora, armed with revolvers, appeared suddenly on the scene. The two rascals found themselves covered by the weapons, and being called upon to surrender, did so with very bad grace. Jack released himself from the tablecloth and took a hand in securing them. The party then gathered about the brass-bound box and looked at it with great interest.

Jack briefly sketched the history of his strange legacy for the benefit of Mr. Warden and his neighbor, and both congratulated him on finding what promised to be his fortune. By the time he had concluded William appeared with three policemen from town. They took charge of Guerrero and Dick Swivel and marched them over to the house, followed by the rest of the party, Jack and William carrying the treasure box between them. The crooks were carried off in the wagon to Willowdale, while Mr. Warden, his neighbor, Jack and Dora sat down to the belated supper. After the meal the treasure box was opened in the library and found to contain \$100,000 in American bills and \$10,000 in English gold.

Then Jack was congratulated once more, and he turned the money over to Mr. Warden, who had been appointed his legal guardian, to keep for him. Three weeks later Guerrero, Cutcliffe and Dick Swivel were tried, convicted and sent to State prison for twenty years each, and Jack was satisfied that he had nothing more to fear from them, the Mexican particularly. After that time passed pleasantly enough with Jack. He had made himself solid with Matthew Warden and Dora Davenport, and the future looked rosy-hued, with one solitary exception—the fact that his father was in jail for life on the charge of murder and robbery.

One year from the time he came to live at Red Gables the old house on the bluff was torn down and ground broken for the erection of a fine summer hotel, which was to be built with a part of Jack's money. While the building was going up a letter reached Willowdale, and was forwarded to Red Gables, addressed to Jack. It was from Jack's father, the first he had ever received from him, and it proved a joyful surprise. M. Gardiner was a free man.

The governor of the State had pardoned him because the real murderer and robber confessed on his dying bed and thus cleared the innocent victim of his crime. Jack at once sent for his father, with Mr. Warden's acquiescence, to come to Red Gables, and thus father and son were reunited. When the hotel was finished Jack put it in charge of his father to run for him, giving him a half interest in it. The enterprise was a great success, thus proving the farsightedness of our hero. A few years later Jack built a second hotel further along the bluff. The summer he put it in commission he and Dora Davenport were married. They continued to live at Red Gables, which would revert to Dora at her uncle's death, but they both hoped that would not take place for a long time. Jack was now both happy and prosperous, and he maintained that this was chiefly due to the fortune he had received through the strangest legacy in the world.

Next weeks' issue will contain "TAKING CHANCES; OR, PLAYING FOR BIG STAKES."

WILL, THE WAGON BOY

or, The Diamonds that Came by Express

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

Putting It Up To Will.

"I though I was made up pretty well. I completely deceived the people in that house. Now don't you worry, Will. We do not accuse you of stealing the diamonds. We know that you did not do it. We have no sort of idea that you did the murder, either. We know that the whole matter came out of a plot originated by Doctor Pajaro, who is really the Rajah of Ghorgee in India, to recover the big diamond known as the Great Ghorgee. I don't suppose you have even heard of this, but it is at the bottom of it all."

"Look here, Nell," broke in Ben, "don't you think it would be just as well to let me run this business? You are deuced sharp, I know, but——"

"I am only trying to make Will understand that we are his friends."

"Well, we are. Listen to me, Will, and look right in my face. I am a square man, and I promise you now that if you will help us I'll stand by you and see you safe out of your trouble. Very likely after I have heard your story I can put my finger on the murderer of Kutter. That lets you out and it lets us into a reward, which we will share with you if you help us to get it. Come, there's my proposition. What do you say?"

"That I accept it," replied Will, quickly. "I am in an awful fix. There is no denying it. If you can straighten me out and put me back on my wagon I'll do anything in the world to help you, so there."

"Shake hands on it," said Ben. "It's a bargain. Now, then, to introduce ourselves. I am Ben Bolton and this is Miss Nellie Tighe. We are both private detectives and we have just taken up this case for Madame Sandusky."

"Was it you who came to the sanitarium?" broke in Will, turning to Nell.

"No. That was Madame Sandusky herself," laughed the woman. "She had rather a rough experience there. That doctor of yours must be a great character. I would like to run up against him just once."

"You never will, I'm afraid. He is probably dead by this time," sighed Will.

Of course the detectives wanted to know how that was, and Will briefly described the accident on Broadway, adding that the doctor had directed him to have a note written in Hindustani to the house where he had met Nell.

He exhibited the note, but never said a word about a diamond. This all-important secret he determined to preserve until the last.

Ben Bolton became immensely excited.

"If Pajaro is dead I'm afraid that may knock us out," he exclaimed, "unless you know all about his part in this affair, Will."

"I know some about it, but I am afraid you will

be disappointed when you find out how little it really amounts to," replied Will. "I can begin my story now, if you wish."

"I must find out first how the case stands with the doctor," said Bolton. "I'll telephone the hospital right away."

He called to the cabby to take them to the nearest telephone pay station, and when he returned to the cab Will was able to read the truth in his face.

"He is dead!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," replied Bolton. "He died under the knife. There was almost no hope for him from the start."

Will showed by his face that he was much moved.

"He was good to me," he said when Nellie Tighe spoke to him about it. "I don't believe he ever murdered Kutter, in spite of what that detective said."

Of course they wanted to know what detective he meant, and Will began his story then.

He told everything that had happened to him, except about the big diamond and the money the doctor had given him. He even told of the visit to the lapidary's place that morning and of the finding of the imitation crowd diamonds, but he made no mention of the Great Ghorgee.

The two detectives listened to his narrative with intense interest.

When told about that strange sceance in the house on Albany street Ben Bolton made him go all over the ground again.

By the time he had finished the cab pulled up at a small brick house far over in the Greenwich village, and Will followed the detectives inside.

It proved to be the home of Nellie Tighe, and Will was received by a pleasant-faced old lady whom Nell introduced as her mother.

Dinner was ready, and they all sat down together; no further allusion was made to the diamond business until after dinner, when they found themselves alone in the little parlor.

Ben Bolton then began to talk.

"You have fallen in luck in meeting us, Will," he said. "Nothing could have served you better. Here you are perfectly safe from the police. Now, let me go over the situation again with you and we will form some definite plan of action. These diamonds belong to Madame Sandusky, and it is up to us to get them for her. I have my own ideas as to where they are, and I think you can be of the greatest assistance to us, but first I want to clear up matters so that you may definitely understand where we are at. About this Detective Keene. Did he say by whom he was employed?"

"I don't know that he did. I don't remember. I thought he must have been hired by Madame Sandusky."

"No. That is not so. He was employed by this man Captain Bogan, who passes as the Prince Bogano. He preceded the diamonds across the ocean, and fixed the plot with Joe Martin, I believe. Perhaps Doctor Pajaro did the same. We will never know now, but I believe Martin sold out to both. I have questioned the fellow in the Tombs but little can be learned from him. He sticks to it that he had nothing to do with the examiners in the public stores, but I believe the story the doctor told you. Why Captain Bogan knocked you out on the stairs is plain enough. He had been

balked in his scheme to get the diamonds. He knew that you were the wagon boy who delivered them, and he thought that you knew more than you actually did. Of course, he did not intend to fracture your skull, but when he found that he had knocked you out it was up to him to knock you again, so that he could find out whom you knew. Evidently he knew nothing of Doctor Pajaro's true character, and the fact of his taking you to the sanitarium was one of the strange coincidences which have followed this case from the start. You are following me, I hope, Will? You understand what I mean to convey?"

"I do," replied Will. "I have no doubt you are right; but how can I tell?"

"You can't tell. We are groping in the dark. I—well, what is it, Nell?"

"I think you are missing the main point altogether," put in Nellie Tighe. "According to Will, although Doctor Pajaro and one of the examiners were in the vacant office at the time of the murder, they did not have a hand in it."

"So the doctor said."

"And I believe he told the truth, for he seems to have been particularly open and above-board with Will all the way through. Now, why didn't they leave the office and for the diamonds? They must have been prevented from doing so in some way. Who prevented them? How did he do it? That's the main point."

"No," said Ben Bolton. "That concerns the murder. The main point is the diamonds. If Will has it all straight and those pictures in the light meant anything, then Kutter hid the diamonds in the chimney and they were recovered by some one only this morning. Who that person was is pain enough to me. It is up to the man with the scarred face."

Nellie shrugged her shoulders.

"When you come to talk about the pictures in the light you are talking rubbish," she said. "You will never get me to believe in anything of that sort. I don't belong to Madame Sandusky's Bhuddistical society. I am no follower of Swami Muryanda, in spite of the fact that I pretended to be."

"I believe in them," said Will. "If you had seen them as I did you would believe, too."

"True or false," added Ben Bolton, "the person we really want to get next to is the man with the scarred face. I think I can locate him, and when we get him I think we shall have caught the murderer and the diamond thief."

"How?" cried Nellie.

Ben Bolton pointed his finger at the wagon boy, saying:

"It is up to you, Will."

CHAPTER XIX.

Doing Detective Work.

At last, after much knocking about, Will had fallen among those who seemed to be friends.

Ben Bolton and Nellie Tighe—we have not given them their true names—were two well-known detectives in New York City. Miss Tighe, especially, enjoyed a record for shrewdness and capability.

But, in spite of their standing in private detective circles, Will, the wagon boy, had never heard

of them, and he had already secretly determined that in case the stolen diamonds should by any unexpected good fortune fall into his hands, there was just one thing to do, and that was to take them not to Madame Sandusky, but straight to the office of Allen's express.

Then, whether or not the cloud which had now for so many weeks hung over him was cleared away, Will was ready to meet his fate.

Nothing was done that day but to talk and plan. All that was said need not be detailed here.

We pass on to the next morning, when Will had his first experience as an assistant in detective work.

Meanwhile, Ben Bolton had taken Will to a Turkish bath, where he was thoroughly scrubbed, in the hope of removing some of the results of Doctor Pajaro's dyeing process.

The attempt was a failure.

The kind of tan which the doctor had rubbed into Will's hide was the kind which would not come off. When our hero left the bath he looked as brown as ever, so Ben Bolton changed his tactics, which had been to pass him off for what he really was, a young Englishman, concocted a new plan, and restoring Will's wig, decided to let him remain a Hindu, which was just as well, as it proved.

At ten o'clock Will entered a cab with Madame Sandusky's double, still disguised to represent Madame Sandusky herself, and the two were driven to the Public Stores.

Madame's card went in to the superintendent, and Will, dressed as a servant, was with her when she was ushered into the presence of that high and mighty official, whose will in those gloomy buildings on Lighthouse street is ever law.

Of course the world-famous prima donna could not be received, even by this high and mighty official, with other than immense respect.

Madame was still most anxious about her diamonds.

Detectives had failed her, the police had proved themselves powerless; she had never even seen the famous stones, which had been the gift of a prince, since she saw them in the royal residence in Bulgaria. She was anxious to talk with some one who had seen them. Would it be too much to ask for an interview with Mr. Walter Daycock, the famous diamond expert of the Public Stores, who had personally examined the stones?

The superintendent was only too happy to oblige, and Mr. Daycock was promptly summoned.

When the door opened and this man entered the office Will's eyes were upon him.

There was a peculiar scar on one side of his face.

Already Ben Bolton's carefully paid scheme was working itself out.

This was unquestionably the man whom Will and Doctor Pajaro had encountered coming out of Karl Kutter's office the morning before.

He glanced at Will curiously, but did not appear to recognize him in his different dress, for Will now wore a suit of livery and looked the servant to perfection.

He received the assumed Madame Sandusky rather coldly; but he described the diamonds in detail, asking if anything had been heard of them when he was through.

"Alas! Nothing!" replied Nellie, in a despairing tone, "but, Mr. Daycock, I think you can assist me. I am in deeper trouble than you know, and I am willing to pay liberally for anything which is done to help me out."

"I don't know what I can do, madame," was the cold response. "My connection with the case ended when I examined the diamonds."

"I am aware of that," said madame, "but you do not understand."

She lowered her voice and whispered a few hurried words in the expert's ear.

Will saw his face change. It was ever so slight a change; but it showed his deep interest just the same.

His reply, however, did not indicate that he felt the slightest interest in madame's remarks.

"It is quite impossible that it should be as you say!" he answered aloud. "I am as absolute master of my business. I should have recognized it at once."

Nellie pulled a long face.

"Then I have been grossly deceived," she said. "I almost begin to think that it was never intended that I should have these diamonds; that the Prince's executors hired some one to commit this robbery and all the rest of it."

"Such has been my opinion from the first," was the cold reply; "however, you may dismiss from your mind any notion that the Great Ghorgee was among those imitation crown jewels. I have examined hundreds of similar fabrications, and I can assure you that the true character of those in question was apparent at a glance."

This ended the farce, for Nellie promptly took her departure, after warmly thanking the expert for his courtesy.

"Well?" she said, when she and Will again found themselves in the cab.

"That is the man."

"You are sure?"

"Absolutely positive that is the man Doctor Pajaro and I met coming out of Kutter's old place yesterday morning."

"Good!" cried Nellie. "One most important point gained, for which we have you to thank, Will. If the rest of Ben's scheme works out as well as this has we shall be right in it before the day is over. Now to find Ben."

Will leaned back on his seat, wondering what Nellie would say if she only knew that at that very moment the Great Ghorgee was snugly reposing in his pocket.

But Ben Bolton had not confided any part of his plan to Will, and our hero was more than determined to keep his own counsel.

He had become intensely interested in the new turn his complicated affairs had taken. It was like watching a game of chess, and he was deeply interested to know what the next move would be.

Greatly to his surprise—for he had not heard the order which Nellie had given to the driver—they were driven downtown and turned into Maiden Lane, where the cab was dismissed.

"You are not going to Kutter's office, are you?" asked Will.

"Yes and no," replied Nellie. "We are going to the vacant office on the other side of the hall. Come along, Will."

When they reached the top of those interminable stairs, which Will remembered so well, Nellie knocked twice on the door of the vacant office.

It was instantly opened by Ben Bolton.

"Come in, quick!" he whispered. "I hope you haven't made much noise coming upstairs."

"Just as little as possible," replied Nellie.

"That's good. Don't want any one in the building to suspect that we are hiding here, if I can help it."

"Did you have any trouble getting the keys of the agent?" Nellie asked.

"He is only too anxious to have the mystery cleared up. Says the office is hoodooed, and he is afraid he won't be able to rent it for months to come. But you have asked me questions enough for one while. How did you and Will make out?"

"Fine! I had one more question to ask, but you have already answered it. Kutter's office has not been rented, then?"

"Certainly not. Well?"

"Will was right."

"Good! You saw Daycock, then?"

"We did."

"You are sure, Will?"

"Certainly I am," replied Will. "I could not possibly make any mistake about that face."

"There you are, then!" cried Ben. "We know who took the diamonds from the chimney now. I wonder Doctor Pajaro could have been so blind."

"I don't think he more than half believed that they were there himself," said Will. "I'm sure I didn't. I can't feel so sure now."

"Did you throw him the bait, Nell?" asked Ben Bolton, eagerly.

"I did."

"And it was swallowed?"

"Hook and all."

"Good! He had never heard of the Great Ghorgee?"

"Oh, yes, he had heard of it; but he scouted the idea that it could possibly have been among the false crown diamonds."

"Did he, indeed! He cannot make a mistake when it comes to diamonds, I suppose. That is where the impossible comes in."

"That's it; but at the same time, Ben, you ought to have seen his face change when I whispered in his ear that I had expected to find the Great Ghorgee among those imitation diamonds. Ah! It was plain enough. Even Will noticed it—didn't you, Will?"

"Of course I did," replied Will. "He was interested, all right, although he pretended not to be. Any one could see that."

"Then, by thunder, we are making no mistake!" cried Ben. "We have him, we surely have him, and if he hasn't got those diamonds I'll eat my head!"

"What's to be done?" demanded Nellie, in response to Ben Bolton's exalted exclamation. "I don't read the riddle just as you do, Ben; but all the same I am willing to do my part."

"You don't believe in Hindu magic, and I do," replied Ben. "To call it magic is all nonsense, though. As I told you before, I've made a study of that kind of business, and I know that these Hindu fakirs do actually accomplish wonders. Excuse me a moment, Will. Pull over there by the window! I want to say a few words to Nell in private. It is perfectly safe. This extension don't reach half across the line of the roof, and no one can see you from the street."

Will put himself out of hearing.

(To be continued.)

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

HELIUM GAS AS ANAESTHETIC

Helium gas has other uses besides that of lifting airships. It has been employed with marked success as an anaesthetic.

WAR SOUVENIR IN SCALP

George R. Clark, traffic policeman, Wichita, Kan., has a new souvenir of the war which wasn't brought overseas in a truck or kit-bag. It is a piece of shrapnel the size of a small bullet which recently was removed by a surgeon from Clark's scalp. The piece of metal found a home in Clark's anatomy five years ago during the Argonne battle. He suffered a number of other wounds at the time.

GIVES MONEL METAL A CUTTING EDGE

A process has been discovered by which monel metal can be so hardened as to produce a cutting edge of practically the same character as knife steel. It is the invention of Leon Cammen, President of the Northwind Spark Plug Corporation.

This discovery will have an important bearing on the manufacture of cutlery and tools, especially for tropical countries, as the new metal is absolutely unaffected by moisture, vegetable and animal acids and the majority of mineral acids.

CAMERA WITHOUT FILM

The amateur photographer of the future may be taking pictures without the aid of either film or plate in his camera, if the recent invention made by a South African chemist is popularized.

By this new method a street scene can be photographed and printed all within three minutes and fifteen seconds. The photograph is taken directly on a sensitized paper instead of on film or plate, and the image is developed in a few seconds.

SHEEP'S BLOOD FOR MEN

Sheep's blood in a man's body! This statement, which sounds like the old incantations of witchcraft, may soon represent an accomplishment in the field of medicine. Professor Yourevitch and Mademoiselle Teleguina of Prague, Szecho-Slo-

vakia, have finished experiments that seem to show that when a human being loses a large amount of blood, so that transfusion is necessary, blood can be taken from animals and injected into the man's body to replenish the supply.

This has always been thought impossible. Indeed, transfusion heretofore has been possible only between certain human beings who happened to be in the same "blood-group." The injection of animal blood into the human body has been considered impossible without death resulting. But the Zecho-Slovakian scientists have succeeded in "washing" the red corpuscles of the blood to be injected, and in this way they saved a rabbit's life by injecting sheep's blood. They suggest that the sheep's blood could also save human lives, and furthermore, that the blood could be bottled up and stored for an emergency for a long time.

LAUGHS

He—you must have known from the first that I was in love with you by my actions. She—But it's natural for some men to be foolish.

Wife—When we go anywhere now we have to walk. Before marriage you always called a cab. Husband—That's why we have to walk now.

Mamma—Now, Johnny, when you divide your orange with your little sister ask her to have the larger piece. Small Johnny—Oh, fudge! What's the use of asking her?

Mrs. O'Hoolahan—Oi hear thot the city wather is unhilthy. Mrs. O'Callahan—Well, Pat says smart men say thot runnin' wather is always hiltly. So Oi let it run at the faucets all the toime!

Merchant—I'll give you a position as clerk to start with and pay you what you are worth. Is that satisfactory? Applicant—Oh, perfectly; but—er—do you think the firm can afford it?

"I suppose you have nothing to do since your wife went away," said Cumso. "Haven't I?" replied Cawker. "I'm kept busy shipping things she forgot in her trunks, and that she writes for by every mail."

"I am proud to say that my grandfather made his mark in the world," observed the conceited youth. "Well, I supposed he wasn't the only man in those days who couldn't write his name," replied his bored companion.

First Little Girl—Your papa and mamma are not real parents. They adopted you. Second Little Girl—Well, that makes it all the more satisfactory. My parents picked me out, and yours had to take you just as you came.

The lawyer was drawing up old Furrow's will "I hereby bequeath all my property to my wife," dictated the son of the soil. "Got that?" "Yes," answered the lawyer. "On condition that she marries again within a year." The legal man sat back, puzzled. "But why?" he asked. The aged farmer smiled. "Because," was the reply, "I want somebody to be sorry I died!"

A RIDE FOR LIFE

The twilight was rapidly deepening into dusk on a pleasant evening in June, as a young horseman of twenty-two or three years of age emerged from the forest path, and checking the animal's pace, paused for an instant or two contemplating the scene before him.

A truly pastoral scene it was, though only a settler's humble clearing on the very confines of civilization, and to the young man it was the dearest spot on earth.

It was the home of old Seth Morgan, one of the first of the hardy pioneers who more than seven years before penetrated to these western wildernesses, and out of the heart of the primeval forest hewed a homestead for himself and family.

It was not an excess of affection for the hardy settler, however, that caused such emotion to fill the breast of the young man, whose name was Edward Weston, but a far deeper feeling—the strong and passionate love he cherished for his oldest daughter, Clara, who was his affianced wife.

The girl returned his affection, and the following day had been appointed for the wedding.

Already the guests had been invited, and more than a dozen men and women standing about the door of the little log cabin waved their hats and handkerchiefs toward the expectant bridgeroom as he paused for a moment after emerging from the forest.

Again urging on his horse, in a few minutes longer he had reached the house, and dismounting, was warmly greeted by the guests.

Another moment, and his betrothed wife was clasped to his breast.

Looking at them as they stood beside each other, they made a singularly handsome pair—he with his resolute, sun-browned face and dark eyes and hair, she with her rippling golden tresses and eyes of the deepest, divinest blue.

Guests from distant clearings came gradually dropping in, until when the night had fallen they numbered more than twenty of both sexes, and by ten o'clock the floor had been cleared for dancing, the enlivening strains of the fiddle floated through the open window upon the calm night air.

Had the merry-makers but known that more than a hundred dark-skinned figures, their faces hideous with crimson war paint, were crawling stealthily toward the house, it might have changed their joyousness to fear, but they suspected nothing until it was too late, and with fiendish cries of exultation upon their lips the savages were among them.

Taken wholly by surprise, the settlers had not the ghost of a chance to defend themselves, and although they fought like men who expect no mercy, a few minutes and the butchery was ended.

With his body protecting the girl he loved, Edward Weston had fought with the ferocity of despair, and more than one bloodthirsty savage had fallen never to rise again beneath the stroke of his bowie knife; but at last he was overpowered by numbers, and the blood stream-

ing from a ghastly wound upon his forehead, he sank unconscious to the ground.

When he again came to himself the day was breaking, and he was lying among the cold and mangled remains of the wedding guests.

Staggering to his feet as recollection gradually came back to him, a feeling of surprise mingled with despair.

While a few of the corpses were scalped and their countenances hacked and mutilated beyond recognition, the majority remained untouched.

Another circumstance also attracted his attention.

Among the corpses there were no female ones except that of Mrs. Morgan, and the conclusion naturally presented itself that the rest of the women had been carried off alive.

Clara might still be alive, and if she were his life still had a purpose. He would recover her, dead or alive, from her savage captors, and wreak upon them such a vengeance as should be remembered for years.

As he made this resolution he staggered toward the little brook that flowed past the rear of the house, and laving his brow with the cool water, and binding up his wound, in a short time he felt stronger.

Fortunately, his horse had not been placed in the stable, but turned loose to pasture, and in less than half an hour he was ready for his desperate enterprise.

In the course of several hours in the saddle the evidence of precaution the savages had used so far to cover their trail became less marked, and he knew he must be approaching their encampment.

Suddenly the howls of the legion of mongrel curs always to be found following an Indian camp smote upon his ears, and the next moment he saw in the distance the gleam of the smoldering fires.

Checking his horse, he dismounted, and securing the animal in a clump of thick undergrowth he prepared to continue the trail on foot.

Assuring himself that the chambers of the revolver were in working order, he began to make his way toward the distant camp. His progress was necessarily slow, and more than an hour elapsed before he reached it.

Prostrate, face downward upon the ground, he crawled toward the nearest tent.

With a skill that would have done no discredit the most experienced scout, he dragged his body noiselessly along the ground until he had reached the first tent of the semi-circle beginning at the waters' edge.

A dozen or more Indians lay upon the ground asleep, but there was no sign of the presence of the maiden he was risking his life to rescue, and again the malignant look came upon his face as he thought of the revenge he contemplated.

Unslinging the powder-horn, he sprinkled a thin trail of the powder along the ground, beginning beside the small heap of fragments he had cut from the covering of the lodge.

Then, still lying face downward upon the ground, he made his way toward the next wigwam, leaving behind him, as he passed, the thin trail of powder.

In his impatience to know at once the best or worst, he did not take time, as he had done before, to cut the opening inch by inch, but with two rapid slashes of his knife tore away a piece of the canvas large enough to admit his whole body.

As he did so the noise aroused the sole occupant of the wigwam, an Indian whose extra adornments upon his dress showed him to be a chief and who, with a guttural ejaculation of mingled anger and surprise, sprang toward him.

The hatchet he had snatched from his belt was upraised threateningly, and in an instant Edward Weston realized his position.

It was no time for hesitation, and grasping his bowie-knife firmly he raised himself upon his elbow and hurled it with all his strength at the advancing savage.

The aim was true, and without so much as a single shriek of pain the Indian fell dead upon the ground with the knife buried to the hilt in his bosom.

Springing through the opening the young man bent over the prostrate body, and seized the knife to draw it from the dead chief's breast.

Hardly had he done so than the blanket over the doorway was thrown aside, and another savage entered.

For a moment he stood bewildered, and then snatching the tomahawk from his belt, a wild cry left his lips, and he sprang toward the young man, the weapon upraised for the deadly blow.

For a moment also, Edward Weston had stood in bewilderment, but it was not the entrance of the savage that caused his indecision.

As the blankets had been raised, he had seen, passing around one of the capes in the distance, a party of men, and among them he also fancied he saw the flutter of women's dresses.

Could it be possible that Clara had escaped and was with them? The knowledge of the fugitive party and the question flashed through his mind with the electric quickness of thought, but there was no time to ponder over an answer.

Already the hatchet of the savage was upraised above his head, and grasping his knife, the young man stood on the defensive.

With a whistling sound the tomahawk cut through the air, but with a sudden movement Edward Weston evaded the stroke, and the next moment his bowie knife was buried in the Indian's bosom.

With one wild death cry the savage fell backward, and the young man, knowing that in an instant the whole camp would be upon him, felt that there was no time to be lost if he would make his escape. But first there was his revenge.

Emptying the remaining contents of his powder-horn upon the ground, he drew one of his revolvers from his belt and fired. In an instant it ignited the gray dark of which the wigwam was built, and then a thin streak of fire like a serpent ran on to the next until, before a minute had elapsed, the whole encampment was in a blaze.

A wild, ringing laugh of triumph upon his lips, Edward Weston ran at the top of his speed toward where his horse was picketed, but already

the whole of the savages, with fierce cries of rage, were after him.

Suddenly a cry of alarm breaking simultaneously from his pursuers caused him to check his pace, and, looking around, he saw in an instant the cause of their fear.

The flames of the blazing wigwams had spread into the chaparral, and the whole forest would soon be on fire.

Too well the young man realized now what he had done.

In seeking revenge upon his savage foes he had probably also doomed himself. It was now a race between the fire and him which should first reach the spot where he had left his horse, but at last he did so in safety and sprang into the saddle.

The heat was growing unbearable. Mechanically Weston strove to urge on his horse's stumbling footsteps; a wild delirium seemed to take possession of his senses, and then all was blank.

When he again recovered consciousness he was lying upon a blanket stretched beneath the shadow of a tree.

Gazing about him in a bewildered way, his glance was suddenly riveted by an anxious face that was bending over him.

"Am I awake?" he gasped. "Has it all been a dream? Clara!"

They were indeed Clara's blue eyes that were gazing into his, and Clara's sweet voice that explained his seemingly miraculous deliverance.

He had been correct in his surmise that Clara was one of the fugitives he had seen passing behind the shelter of the cave at the moment the savage had raised the hatchet to deal his death-blow. With her companions she had managed to escape from the Indian camp, and almost immediately had fallen in with a company of United States troops, who at once took them under their protection, and also riding away from the fire, had, luckily for Edward Weston come upon him at the very moment his horse had fallen and thrown him stunned to the ground.

The fate of Clara Morgan's parents had been terribly avenged, and the girl left quite alone in the world; two weeks later the interrupted ceremony took place, and she became the wife of Edward Weston.

"HI, PUP!" BY ONE; "HEY, PUP!" OTHER;
DOG SCORNS BOTH

A Pekinese pup was claimed by John Kline, No. 395 Broadway, Brooklyn, and Arthur Renecke, stationer, at No. 272 Broadway, when Kline was accused in Bridge Plaza Court of having stolen the animal.

The defendant insisted he had bought the dog. Renecke asserted he had bought the pup eight months ago and two weeks ago someone stole it.

Attempts to have the dog choose for itself which master it desired proved futile. It did not seem inclined to favor either one or the other when placed midway between them.

The case was adjourned till next month, Kline promising to produce the man who sold him the dog. Kline was paroled.

CURRENT NEWS

FEED BIRDS BY PLANE

For what is believed to be the first time on record an airplane will be used to distribute feed to the game birds in Blair County, Pa. A hopper with a capacity of 200 pounds of mixed grain and corn will carry the feed, which will be released at convenient places for the wild life.

PERFUMED SUBWAYS

A perfumed subway will be the latest boast of Paris, according to a decision of the directors. Following hundreds of protests of bad air and disagreeable odors, the underground line has decided to install a hygienic apparatus in stations and cars, giving off a delicious fragrance.

MICROSCOPIC WILL

For the first time in history, clerks in the Civil Court at New Orleans, La., were forced to obtain a microscope before they could read the will left by Mrs. Marie Preau. The document was written on both sides of a paper two inches in area. The will disposed of a small amount of jewelry.

OFFERS LEG FOR \$100,000

Leslie McKinley, thirty-two, Superintendent of Gibson Hotel ballroom, says he will sell a leg for \$100,000. McKinley's offer is made to James Tatom, a machinist of Dayton, Ohio, who wants a leg. Tatom has two now, but one is cork and it worries him. He wants to have a human limb grafted to his body and announced he was willing to pay for it.

READY TO SELL MINNOWS

Rescue Daugherty's minnow farm has been made ready for a big season. The farm is the only thing of its kind in this part of the country. It is located in the back ward of Daugherty's East Street home. A flooded flower pit at a house nearby serves to care for the overflow when the "farm" proper is crowded.

SNIPS SLEEPING WOMAN'S HAIR

Mrs. Waters Howe of Orlando Fla., claims to have been the victim of the meanest thief in the United States—one who, she said, clipped the hair from her head while she was asleep in a Pullman en route from Jacksonville, Fla., to Port Thomas, Ky. Mrs. Howe reported that besides her hair, she was robbed of several pieces of jewelry and \$300 in cash.

PIKE SPEARING ON HAMILTON BAY

Pike spearing is a recognized industry on the shores of Hamilton Bay, Lake Ontario, the harbor of the beautiful city of Hamilton, during the winter season. The first intimation the citizens have that the ice is formed thick enough to bear is when they see some fine morning the little square huts of the adventurous spearsmen shoved out on the glistening surface of the frozen waters. The huts in which the spearsmen shelter themselves from the cold are small wooden structures, about five feet square by six feet high,

with a small door on the side, and sometimes a window. They are easily fitted on sleds, so that their owners can draw them over the ice from place to place in search of an advantageous location. When the spearsman has deported his hut to the proper point, he proceeds to cut a hole in the ice about eighteen inches in diameter, and over this he sets the hut, having taken it off the sled. The outer edges are banked up with snow, and water poured over it until it freezes solid, and the cold is effectually excluded. The interior furniture is very simple, and usually consists of a piece of board nailed across one corner for a seat, and another shelf on which stands a small cast iron stove, the pipe of which goes through the roof. A village of these miniature houses makes quite a picturesque appearance on a bright winter morning. The spears, hand nets, poles, etc., piled against the sides, the little heaps of fire wood beside each door, the spiral wreaths of delicate blue smoke ascending almost perpendicularly up into the clear, crisp, frosty air, and the long shadows cast by the rising sun along the shining surface of the snow-covered lake make up a picture against the background of somber evergreen-covered bluffs that is not easily forgotten.

The spearsmen usually select portions of the bay where the water shoals and has a smooth, sandy bottom. They do not, as a rule, venture into deep water, but prefer the shallow eddies where the bottom is plainly visible. The hut is kept carefully closed, and the only light to the interior comes up through the ice beneath. It needs great patience as well as endurance to make a successful spearsman. There he sits hour after hour on his little ledge with his six-pronged spear poised above the hole in the ice, watching for the curious pike coming up to investigate the shining minnow bait at the entrance of the hole or to get a breath of air. When sport is good the occupation is fascinating enough as a pastime, but it often happens that the spearsman may sit in the bitter cold for an hour at a time, not daring to move, and yet never see the slim, graceful outlines of a fish in the translucent waters below. When a pike does appear, the spearsman waits until it is well under the hole, and then, before it has time to be alarmed, darts down his six-pronged spear like a flash. The spear resembles lightning, according to the small boy's definition, in that it never needs to strike twice in the same place. It is seldom the fish can dodge it.

Sometimes the houses are larger and more pretentious than those above described, and the spearsman is occasionally accompanied by a boy to feed the stove, bring in wood, and generally look after his comfort. But at the best it is rather a lonely and arduous way of making a living. Hamilton Bay is particularly well adapted to this mode of fishing, as when the ice is first formed it seldom breaks up until the winter is over, on account of the inclosed nature of that body of water. Frequently as many as two or three hundred of these huts can be counted on the surface of the bay and among the many coves that mark its beautiful shores.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

AN IDEA OF SPACE

One may judge how great is the distance to even the nearest stars, says Nature Magazine, from the fact that Vega, a near neighbor, is about 1,500,000 times more distant than the sun, which is our own particular sun, the one about which our earth revolves.

AZTECS GREW CORN

The only related plant with which corn will cross fertilize is teosinte, a large, semi-tropical grass growing wild in the uplands of Central America and adjoining regions, says Nature Magazine. It is in this country of the ancient Mayas, Aztecs and Incas that the most abundant evidence has been found in early cultivation.

JAP EARTHQUAKE TOLL

A unique collection of books and manuscripts has been lost through the Japanese earthquake, including the Korean Chronicles of the Li Dynasty in 790 volumes; the Topography of Japanese Counties and Towns, 6,400 volumes; and the great Chinese Encyclopedia in 9,998 volumes.

POTATO'S TRAVELS

The potato plant is a native of America. Growing wild on the plateaus of Mexico and Chili, it made its way first to Spain, then to Italy and Vienna, and finally won the plaudits and the appetites of the rest of the Old World. Sir Walter Raleigh was responsible for its introduction into Ireland in 1586.

BOXES OF GREEN LUMBER WEAKEN

Packing boxes made of properly seasoned lumber are found to resist rough handling six to ten times as well as those made of green lumber. The reason, as demonstrated by the Forest Products Laboratory, is that the fibres of the moist wood shrink away from the nails as the stock dries, and so lose their grip.

REVOLUTIONARY MOTOR

A gas turbine engine that, it is claimed, may revolutionize automobile and airplane motors is being perfected by a French engineer, says Popular Science Monthly. It is said to combine the advantages of the explosive gas motor and the steam turbine.

Recent tests before officers of the French Air Service are reported to have given complete satisfaction, the engine turning smoothly at the rate of 1,000 revolutions a minute.

DETROIT EDISON'S INCOME

Net income of the Detroit Edison Company for April is reported at \$746,753, as against \$548,458 in the same month last year. For the first four months of this year the profit was \$3,993,837, against \$3,033,426 for the same period in 1925. Total operating revenue for April was \$3,321,755, against \$2,761,903 a year ago, while the total non-operating revenue was \$295,572, against \$174,046. For the four-month period total operating revenue aggregated \$14,000,591, compared with \$11,-

680, 720, and the non-operating revenue reached \$1,528,918, against \$1,256,580.

DEEPEST MINE HAS PHONE

The deepest telephone in the world was installed recently at the bottom of Tamarack No. 5 shaft of Calumet and Hecla Consolidated at Calumet. The equipment was placed in commission by the company's electrical department, assisted by employees of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company.

The shaft is 5,300 feet deep, vertically, the deepest in the United States. The connecting cable weighs almost four ton, averaging a pound and a half a foot. It is anchored to shaft timbers with fasteners that support the weight and prevent the line from sagging or breaking.

FIRST OCEAN STEAMER FLEW AMERICAN FLAG

The first steam vessel crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1819, about a year after the adoption of the American flag as we know it now, and it flew the American colors.

The Savannah, built at New York by Francis Pickett, was a vessel of 300 tons burden, and was still on the stocks when William Scarborough, a wealthy merchant of Savannah, Ga., who was anxious to try the effect of steam navigation on the high seas, bought her as she stood.

The boat is described as having a fuel storage capacity of seventy-five tons of coal and twenty-five cords of wood, with her wheels so constructed as to be removable in stormy weather. She was launched August 23, 1818, and started on her first outside voyage, a trip from New York to Savannah on Sunday, March 28, 1819. Stephen Vail of Morristown, N. J., furnished the boat's engines. Tuesday, April 6, she reached Savannah, where her consignee, Scarborough & McKinnie, immediately advertised for passengers and freight to make the transatlantic voyage, to start May 20. They waited, but there was no response; there was much enthusiasm and intense excitement, but no one wished to risk either life or property on board the Savannah.

The owners, nothing daunted, started on the 20th of May as advertised, though the boat did not venture upon the high seas until the 25th. With the Stars and Stripes flying from the stern of the ship, she steamed ahead, her voyage being uneventful until the 16th of June, when the Irish coast was sighted. On the 17th Lieutenant Brown of the King's cutter Kite, boarded the Savannah under the impression from the volumes of smoke rising from her smokestacks that she was a ship on fire.

On the 20th of June "the wheels were shipped and the sails furled, and the Savannah ran into the River Mersey, and at 6 p. m. came to anchor off Liverpool, with the small bower anchor," according to the log. She created great excitement, as she had crossed the Atlantic from land to land in twenty-two days, on fourteen of which the engines were used.

Later the Savannah visited Stockholm, Petrograd and other foreign ports, triumphantly carrying the American flag.

FROM EVERYWHERE

CARRY OFF SAFE

A safe weighing 600 pounds was carried from the Fred Hammer meat market, on Main Street, Bridgeport, Ohio, into a field some distance away and blown open. The robbers obtained \$372, but did not take a number of old coins Hammer had kept in the safe.

Hammer lived above the store, but did not hear the robbers at work, nor did residents nearby hear the explosion when the safe was blown open.

FOOTPRINTS OF TWENTY-FIVE MILLION YEARS AGO

Footprints made in the sand approximately 25,000,000 years ago by animals long since extinct have been discovered in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. They have been preserved indelibly in the record of the rocks, in this instance the Coconino sandstone of Arizona.

Dr. Charles W. Gilmore, the palaeontologist who uncovered many of these ancient tracks, has brought specimens of them to Washington. He describes the unique exhibit for the first time in a bulletin of the Smithsonian Institution made public today.

The human mind, says Doctor Gilmore, can scarcely grasp the idea of the vast age of animal life on earth presented by these strange footprints. Some tracks of extinct quadrupeds were first discovered in the Grand Canyon in 1915 by Prof. Charles Schuchert. In 1924 Dr. John C. Merriam, President of the Carnegie Institute of Washington, conceived the idea of having a permanent exhibit of the footprints in place, just as they were found, so that the tourist that visits the Grand Canyon may see them.

Such an exhibit has been prepared on the Hermit Trail by Doctor Gilmore, in addition to the specimens brought to Washington. The tracks include those of new and unknown species that lived in the wet sand of this region millions of years ago. The Smithsonian Institution hopes later to do similar work in other localities and to take steps to preserve such natural phenomena.

"The great antiquity of these footprints, which occur from 900 to 1,080 feet below the level of the present rim of the canyon," says Doctor Gilmore, "is clearly demonstrated at this locality.

"It is obvious that since the day when those animals impressed their feet in what at that time was moist sand, more than 1,000 feet of rock-making materials were piled up in successive strata above them, and this does not take into account many hundreds of feet more than have been eroded off from the present top of the canyon wall.

"The great length of time required for the cutting away or erosion of the rock to form the deep canyon, and the even longer time necessary for the original deposition of this great mass of stone is, when translated into terms of years, if that were possible, so stupendous as to be almost beyond human comprehension.

"It is hoped that the object lesson so graphically taught by this unique exhibit may serve as

an example to stimulate the preparation and preservation of other natural phenomena to be found in our Government controlled parks, monuments and reservations."

MUMMIFIED HORSES ARE FOUND IN EGYPT

Egypt's storehouse of antiquities which revealed to the world the marvelous artistry of Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb, and last year the wonderful art of King Seneferu, the first Pharaoh of Egypt, has created new interest by the discovery of two mummified horses in the pyramids of Sakkara, south of Cairo.

Horses, although known from the very earliest times of Egyptian history, seldom if ever were found mummified, probably because they were not regarded as sacred animals. The ass was the general beast of burden in Egypt, but the horse came with the chariots introduced by the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, the names of the earliest invaders of Egypt, of whom there is definite evidence in tradition.

The find was made in a royal tomb, which was discovered by the Harvard-Boston Egyptian expedition of last March. Unfortunately, the passage of forty-five centuries has dealt severely with the funeral furniture and contents of the tomb, which are mainly reduced to dust, and therefore not likely to prove such a rich find as the Tut-ankh-Amen tomb.

There is, however, a beautiful alabaster sarcophagus, the contents of which, it is hoped, have escaped the ravages of time, and which, it is believed, contains the body of King Seneferu.

In order to preserve some record, if only pictorial, of the contents of the coffin, an artist recently descended its ninety-foot shaft and made minute sketches of the contents before they were disturbed.

The excavators also found a papyrus which related how a female singer from the court of Thoth, the Greek name for the Egyptian God of Letters, Invention and Wisdom, came to encourage the men in their work. But the result of her efforts, if the papyrus has been correctly read and can be trusted, was that the men ceased their work and repaired to the bank of the river to rest.

The discovery of two mummified horses in the Pyramids of Sakkara, south of Cairo, evoked considerable interest from officials of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Horses were not introduced into Egypt until the Seventeenth Dynasty, or about eighteen centuries before Christ, according to A. Lansing, Assistant Curator of the Metropolitan Museum. He was inclined to believe that the mummified horses were of a later date. There is no record, he says, of horses ever being worshiped as sacred animals.

The Apis bulls, held sacred by the Egyptians, were frequently mummified and some excellent specimens are in possession of the New York Historical Society. Mummified crocodiles have been found at the Oasis of Sayum in the Nile Valley, and mummified cats, ibises and falcons have been frequently discovered.

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